

Biological Weapons Convention
2020 Meetings of Experts
30 August – 8 September 2021



United Nations Office at Geneva
Palais des Nations
Geneva, Switzerland

Introduction

1. The 2020 Meetings of Experts to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) will take place between 30 August and 8 September 2021 in Geneva, Switzerland, as follows:

30 to 31 August 2021: Meeting of Experts on Cooperation and Assistance, with a Particular Focus on Strengthening Cooperation and Assistance under Article X to be chaired by Mr. Kimmo Laukkanen of Finland (MX1)

1 to 2 September 2021: Meeting of Experts on Review of Developments in the Field of Science and Technology Related to the Convention to be chaired by Mr. Kazuhiro Nakai of Japan (MX2)

3 September 2021: Meeting of Experts on Strengthening National Implementation to be chaired by Mr. Arman Baissuanov of Kazakhstan (MX3)

6 to 7 September 2021: Assistance, Response and Preparedness to be chaired by Ambassador Elena Kuzmanovska Biondic of North Macedonia (MX4)

8 September 2021: Institutional Strengthening of the Convention to be chaired by Ms. Grisselle del Carmen Rodrigues Ramirez of Panama (MX5)

2. The Meetings of Experts will be held in-person in the E Building of the Palais des Nations, United Nations Office at Geneva, accessible via the Pregny Gate. The conference room number will be communicated at a later stage. Sessions will take place from 10:00-13:00 and 15:00-18:00 on the abovementioned dates.
3. The provisional agendas for the Meetings of Experts are available online in the [UNODA Meetings Place](#). Additional documentation and other information will be posted, as it becomes available, in the same place.
4. This document has been prepared by the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and provides practical information for participants in the Meetings of Experts. The information contained in this document was correct at the time of writing (16 July 2021).

Registration

5. Formal credentials are not required for the Meetings of Experts. Instead, all participants need to be registered by **13 August 2021** in accordance with the BWC [Rules of Procedure](#) and following the procedures described below:
 - a. In accordance with Rule 1, **States Parties** wishing to participate should send, through their Permanent Missions, a letter or *note verbale* to the ISU notifying the full names and titles of the members of the delegation. The head of delegation should be clearly indicated. Only the names of participants listed in the letter or *note verbale* will be included in the official lists of participants of the Meetings of Experts.
 - b. In accordance with Rule 44.1, **Signatory States** wishing to participate should send, through their Permanent Missions, a letter or *note verbale* to the ISU notifying the

full names and titles of the members of the delegation. The head of delegation should be clearly indicated. Only the names of participants listed in the letter or *note verbale* will be included in the official lists of participants of the Meetings of Experts.

- c. In accordance with Rule 44.2(a), **States which are neither parties nor signatories to the Convention** may apply to participate in the Meetings of Experts as Observer States. Observer status is granted by the decision of the Meetings at their opening session. A letter or *note verbale* should be addressed, through their Permanent Missions, to the ISU applying for observer status and listing the full names and titles of the members of the delegation. The head of delegation should be clearly indicated. Only the names of participants listed in the letter or *note verbale* will be included in the official lists of participants of the Meetings of Experts.
 - d. In accordance with Rule 44.4, **international organizations** may apply to participate in the Meetings of Experts as observer agencies. Observer agency status is granted by the decision of the Meetings of Experts, which will consider and decide on requests for observer agency status at their opening sessions. A letter or *note verbale* should be addressed to the ISU applying for observer agency status, listing the full names and titles of the members of the delegation. The name of the head of delegation should be clearly indicated. Only the names of participants listed in the letter or *note verbale* will be included in the official lists of participants of the Meetings of Experts.
 - e. In accordance with Rule 44.5, **NGOs and academic institutions** may register to attend public sessions of the Meetings of Experts. A letter on the official letterhead of the organization should be addressed to the ISU applying for attendance of the public sessions of the Meetings and listing the full names and titles of the representatives who will attend. NGOs and academic institutions that have not previously attended a BWC meeting should indicate previous interactions between the organization and the United Nations in relation to disarmament and non-proliferation issues. A mission statement or summary of work of the organization should be provided. Only the names of participants listed in the letter will be included in the official lists of participants of the Meetings of Experts.
6. If delegation members will not be able to travel to Geneva but wish to make a presentation remotely they should nonetheless be included in the *note verbale* or letter and the Implementation Support Unit should be informed accordingly to ensure that the necessary technical preparations can be made in good time.
 7. In order to promote gender equality, all States Parties, Signatory States, States not Party, international organizations and non-governmental organizations are strongly encouraged to strive for gender balance within their own delegations.
 8. *Notes verbales* and letters should be submitted no later than **13 August 2021**.

Access to the Palais des Nations

9. Please note that in addition to the steps described above, all participants, including those already in possession of a UNOG security badge, need to register online at <https://indico.un.org/event/20209/> by **13 August 2021**. Registration is required for all participants by the Swiss authorities for COVID-19 contact tracing purposes.
10. Participants who have already registered for a previous meeting at the United Nations Office at Geneva, can simply log in to their existing account and register for the Meetings of Experts.
11. Participants registering for the first time will need to provide details of their passport or national identification card and upload a passport quality photo.
12. All participants will need to upload a copy of the *note verbale* or letter from their delegation. If the requested documents are not attached, the system will reject the application.
13. A [user guide](#) is available for reference. For any queries, please contact the Implementation Support Unit at bwc@un.org
14. Once your application has been approved, you will receive a UN Event Pass via e-mail. Security badges can be collected from the Pass and Identification Unit at the Pregny Gate of the Palais des Nations. Participants are advised to come to the Pregny Gate well in advance to allow enough time for security checks. Only participants approved for in-person participation will receive a UN Event Pass.
15. Delegations from States and international organisations can collect their security badges from the Pregny Gate as of 12:00 on 27 August 2021. Please bring a copy of the delegations' letter or *note verbale* or the UN Event Pass received after your successful online registration in order to facilitate the process.
16. NGO representatives can collect their badges in person from 08:00 on 30 August 2021 from the Pregny Gate. A valid passport or national identification card will have to be produced along with the UN Event Pass. Only representatives who have registered online and whose names have been properly included in the letter described above will be granted a security badge.
17. For security reasons, identification badges must always be worn and visible to UN Security staff while inside the Palais des Nations.

Attending the Meetings of Experts

18. All formal sessions of the Meetings of Experts will be held in-person in the E Building of the Palais des Nations (see map below). The conference room number will be communicated at a later stage.
19. Simultaneous interpretation into the six official UN languages will be provided in the main conference room and via the live webcast on [UN Web TV](#). The sound system in the overflow room will only be able to transmit audio in one of the languages but participants

in the overflow room can also follow via UN Web TV or the [Listen Live](#) website on their own devices in any of the six languages.

20. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the following measures¹ will be in effect and must be complied with by participants present in the meeting room:
 - a. Some seats have been blocked off to ensure adequate physical distancing between meeting participants.
 - b. All meeting participants (even those who hold UNOG ground entry passes) must register for events via Indico.UN, including providing a contact phone number.
 - c. Face masks are required in all indoor common areas on the premises, including conference rooms.
 - d. Important hygiene measures such as regular hand washing, cough/sneeze etiquette and keeping safe distances must be respected.
21. Further information on UNOG measures to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic is available below in paragraphs 40 and 41.
22. The Meetings of Experts will be broadcast live on [UN Web TV](#) with interpretation in all six official UN languages. The video recordings will also be archived on UN Web TV to be watched later. Participants who will follow the proceedings remotely on UN Web TV without travelling to the Palais should not register online, as online registration is exclusively for in-person participants. UN Web TV can be accessed without prior registration. Kindly note that UN Web TV allows you to follow the proceedings live but does not allow you to take the floor remotely. Live audio from the Meetings of Experts in any of the six official languages can also be accessed via the [Listen Live](#) website and audio recordings will be available soon after the end of each session via the [Digital Recordings Portal](#).
23. An up-to-date timetable of events, including formal meetings, side events and informal sessions will be available on the [UNODA Meetings Place](#).
24. Electronic boards outside each meeting room will clearly indicate whether the session in progress is public or private. All interested parties can attend public sessions. Private meetings are for States Parties only.
25. Food and drinks are strictly prohibited in the conference rooms. Activities involving food and drinks are allowed only in the areas designated for this purpose.

Documentation

26. Prior to the Meetings of Experts, pre-session documents will be made available on the [UNODA Meetings Place](#). The provisional agendas for the Meetings of Experts are already available in all official languages.
27. States Parties wishing to submit working papers to the Meetings of Experts should do so by **13 August 2021** by sending Microsoft Word versions to bwc@un.org Please get in touch

¹ These are the measures applicable at the time of writing on 16 July 2021. They may change by the time of the Meetings of Experts. Participants are therefore recommended to regularly check the [UNODA Meetings Place](#).

to discuss any specific requirements. Working papers are not translated or edited but delegations are able to submit courtesy translations into English if they so wish.

28. States and international organizations granted observer status might also wish to provide information to delegations at the Meetings of Experts. Documents should be submitted in electronic and hard copy to the ISU. Electronic copies should be sent to bwc@un.org
29. During the Meetings of Experts, in-session documents will be made available on [UNODA Meetings Place](#) as they are issued. Paper copies of documents will not be issued in the conference room.

Presentations and interventions

30. As at the 2018 and 2019 Meetings of Experts, there will be no general debate session during the Meetings of Experts. Delegations can however deliver presentations, introduce working papers and make interventions from the floor. In addition, it will also be possible for a number of experts unable to travel to Geneva to make presentations remotely, or via pre-recorded interventions.
31. Delegations wishing to take the floor during the Meetings of Experts are requested to contact the Implementation Support Unit, particularly those wishing to do so remotely. Copies of presentations etc should be sent to the Implementation Support Unit at bwc@un.org In order to assist the interpreters, copies of presentations and interventions should also be sent to speeches@un.org
32. Practical information for speakers and participants in the Meetings of Experts can be found at <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/conference-management/participant>

Side events

33. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions and the renovations of the Palais des Nations under the Strategic Heritage Plan, the Implementation Support Unit will not have the capacity or resources to facilitate in-person side events during the Meetings of Experts. However, virtual side events can be arranged by the organizers during the Meetings of Experts and the Implementation Support Unit will compile a list of all such events communicated to it and make it available online.
34. Potential side event organizers are kindly requested to fill in the [online request form](#). All applications will be reviewed and submitted for approval to the BWC office holders. The organizers of virtual side events are responsible for hosting and moderating their respective events and handling all associated technical issues.

Rooms and facilities for participants

35. Private meetings for regional groups or other groups of States Parties will depend on room availability. Regional groups coordinators are invited to contact the Implementation

Support Unit well in advance. The Implementation Support Unit will assist the coordinators of the different groups with the announcements for such meetings and participants are kindly invited to check the notice boards and the [UNODA Meetings Place](#) regularly for additional details.

36. Free wifi access is available in the meeting rooms and generally throughout the Palais des Nations.
37. Photocopying facilities will not be available to participants.
38. The closest cafeteria is the Serpent Bar which can be found behind Room XVIII on the first floor of the E Building.
39. A UBS bank is located at Door 6, C Building (see [map](#)) and the SAFI (a general shop) can be found at Door 1, S Building (see [map](#)).

Additional information related to the COVID-19 pandemic

40. Participants should note that travel restrictions are currently in place in Switzerland due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Persons wishing to participate in the Meetings of Experts are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the requirements regarding entry to Switzerland prior to travel. In addition, persons arriving from certain countries are required to quarantine for 10 days upon arrival in Switzerland. Any delegate coming from such a country will therefore need to arrive at least 10 days in advance of the Meetings of Experts, and then quarantine for 10 days.
41. Information on the response to COVID-19 at UNOG is available at <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/covid-19> and participants are encouraged to read it carefully. In addition, Ms. Elena Orlyk is the COVID-19 focal point during the Meetings of Experts and she can be contacted on elena.orlyk@un.org

BWC Sponsorship Programme

42. In order to support and increase the participation of developing States Parties² in annual BWC meetings, the Eighth Review Conference (in 2016) decided to renew the Sponsorship Programme established by the Seventh Review Conference (in 2011).
43. The Sponsorship Programme is administered by the Implementation Support Unit in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Meeting of States Parties and is funded by voluntary contributions from States Parties. The Sponsorship Programme for the Meetings of Experts is supported by a voluntary contribution under European Union Council Decision 2019/97 in support of the BWC.

² Please refer to the DAC List of ODA Recipients at <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>

44. Priority for sponsorship will be given to those developing States Parties which have previously not participated in the meetings or have been unable to regularly send experts from capital. Sponsorship may also be provided, depending on the availability of resources, to enhance participation by States not party in order to promote the universalization of the Convention.

45. Eligible experts wishing to apply for sponsorship can find more information [here](#).

Practical information

46. The map below shows the main conference rooms, entrances and facilities within the Palais des Nations. It also shows the nearest bus and tram stops outside the Palais. A more detailed version of the map is also [available online](#).



47. Additional practical information covering access for people with disabilities, public transport, parking and taxis is available at <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/practical-information/delegates>

48. Participants should also note that due to the ongoing renovations of the Palais des Nations several entrances are currently closed and alternative circulation routes will have to be used. More information is available at <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/about/map/circulation>

Hotel accommodation and visas

49. The ISU cannot offer financial or logistical support to assist with travel to, accommodation during, or other costs related to attending the Meetings of Experts, except for experts who may be selected under the [BWC Sponsorship Programme](#). Practical information about accommodation in Geneva can be found on the website of the [Geneva Welcome Centre](#).

50. Participants are responsible for making their own arrangements for visas, travel and related costs. Further information relating to the procedures and measures concerning the issuance of visas for Switzerland is available by contacting the Swiss embassy or consulate in the participant's country of residence or by referring to the [website](#) of the Swiss Federal Office for Migration. Further information is available from the [Permanent Mission of Switzerland](#).

Participants' behaviour at UN system events

51. The organizations of the United Nations system are committed to enabling events at which everyone can participate in an inclusive, respectful and safe environment. UN system events are guided by the highest ethical and professional standards, and all participants are expected to behave with integrity and respect towards all participants attending or involved with any UN system event.
52. Advancing the Secretary-General's "zero tolerance" vision, and priority agenda to address sexual harassment in the workplace, a [Model Code of Conduct](#) has been developed to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, at UN system events.
53. The [Model Code of Conduct](#) is not a legal document but aims to prevent harassment from occurring at UN system events by sharing expectations of standards of conduct in advance of an event, as well as to support victims by ensuring they are aware that harassment is not tolerated at UN system events and what steps they can take if they are harassed or witness harassment.
54. The [Model Code of Conduct](#) applies to all participants of any BWC Meetings.

Secretariat

55. Further enquiries regarding attendance and participation in the Meetings of Experts should be addressed to:

BWC Implementation Support Unit
United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
United Nations Office at Geneva
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Email: bwc@un.org