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**Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention  
on the Prohibition of the Development,  
Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological  
(Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their  
Destruction**

7 September 2021

English only

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**2020 Meeting  
Geneva, 22-25 November 2021**

**Meeting of Experts on Assistance, Response and Preparedness  
Geneva, 6-7 September 2021**

Item 10 of the Agenda

**Adoption of the factual report reflecting the deliberations  
of the meeting, including possible outcomes**

**Draft Report of the 2020 Meeting of Experts on  
assistance, response and preparedness\***

**I. Introduction**

1. At the Eighth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction ([BWC/CONF.VIII/4](#)), States Parties decided to hold annual meetings and that the first such meeting, in December 2017, would seek to make progress on issues of substance and process for the period before the next Review Conference, with a view to reaching consensus on an intersessional process.

2. At the Meeting of States Parties in December 2017, States Parties reached consensus on the following:

“(a) Reaffirming previous intersessional programmes from 2003-2015 and retaining the previous structures: annual Meetings of States Parties preceded by annual Meetings of Experts.

(b) The purpose of the intersessional programme is to discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action on those issues identified for inclusion in the intersessional programme.

(c) Recognising the need to balance an ambition to improve the intersessional programme within the constraints – both financial and human resources – facing States Parties, twelve days are allocated to the intersessional programme each year from 2018- 2020. The work in the intersessional period will be guided by the aim of strengthening the implementation of all articles of the Convention in order to better respond to current challenges. The Meetings of Experts for eight days will be held back to back and at least three months before the annual Meetings of States Parties of four days each. Maximum use would be made of the Sponsorship Programme funded by voluntary contributions in order to facilitate participation of developing States Parties in the meetings of the intersessional programme.

(d) The meetings of the MSP will be chaired by a representative of the EEG in 2018, a representative of the Western Group in 2019 and a representative of the Group of Non-Aligned Movement and Other States in 2020. The annual Chair will be

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\* Any entry listed in this document does not imply the expression of any opinion regarding, and is without prejudice to, the legal status of any country or territory or of its authorities.

supported by two annual vice-chairs, one from each of the other two regional groups. In addition to the reports of the Meetings of Experts, the Meetings of States Parties will consider the annual reports of the ISU and progress on universality. The Meetings of Experts will be chaired in 2018 by [the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States Parties to the BWC] (MX 1 and MX 2) and the Western Group (MX 3 and MX 4), in 2019 by EEG (MX 1 and MX 2) and NAM (MX 3 and MX 4), and in 2020 by Western Group (MX 1 and MX 2) and by EEG (MX 3 and MX 4); MX 5 will be chaired by the regional group chairing the MSP.

	<i>MSP</i>	<i>MX 1</i>	<i>MX 2</i>	<i>MX 3</i>	<i>MX 4</i>	<i>MX 5</i>
2018	EEG	NAM	NAM	WG	WG	EEG
2019	WG	EEG	EEG	NAM	NAM	WG
2020	NAM	WG	WG	EEG	EEG	NAM

All meetings will be subject mutatis mutandis to the rules of procedure of the Eighth Review Conference.

(e) The Meetings of Experts would be open-ended and will consider the following topics:

[...]

**MX4 (2 days): Assistance, response and preparedness:**

- Practical challenges facing the implementation of Article VII, and possible solutions;
- A set of guidelines and formats to assist a State Party, if required, when submitting an application for assistance in the framework of Article VII;
- Procedures, including the establishment and use of the assistance database, to improve the prompt and efficient response without preconditions to a request of assistance by a State Party under Article VII, and coordination and cooperation among States Parties and with relevant international and regional organizations such as WHO, OIE and FAO, as appropriate;
- Examination of how the concept of mobile biomedical units might contribute to effective assistance, response and preparation with a view to enhancing implementation of the Convention;
- Exploration of approaches by which States Parties, individually or collectively, might contribute to the strengthening of international response capabilities for infectious disease outbreaks, whether natural or deliberate in origin;
- Exploration of means to prepare for, respond to and render assistance in case of the possible hostile use of biological agents and toxins against agriculture, livestock as well as the natural environment.

[...]

(f) Each Meeting of Experts will prepare for the consideration of the annual Meeting of States Parties a factual report reflecting its deliberations, including possible outcomes. All meetings, both of Experts and of States Parties will reach any conclusions or results by consensus. The Meeting of States Parties will be responsible for managing the intersessional programme, including taking necessary measures with respect to budgetary and financial matters by consensus with a view to ensuring the proper implementation of the intersessional programme. The Ninth Review Conference will consider the work and outcomes it receives from the Meetings of States Parties and the Meetings of Experts and decide by consensus on any inputs from the intersessional programme and on any further action.”

3. By resolution 75/88, adopted without a vote on 7 December 2020, the General Assembly, *inter alia*, requested the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the depositary Governments of the Convention and to continue to provide such services as may be required for the conduct and the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the review conferences.

## II. Organization of the Meeting of Experts

4. In accordance with the decisions of the Eighth Review Conference, the 2017 Meeting of States Parties and the 2019 Meeting of States Parties, the Meeting of Experts was originally scheduled to take place from 1 to 2 September 2020. However, the Meeting was postponed several times due to the COVID-19 pandemic and, according to the agreement by States Parties by written silence procedure<sup>1</sup>, it was instead convened at the Palais des Nations in Geneva from 6 to 7 September 2021, chaired by Ambassador Elena Kuzmanovska Biondic of the Republic of North Macedonia.

5. On 6 September 2021, the Meeting of Experts adopted its agenda (BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/1) as proposed by the Chair.

6. Following a suggestion by the Chair, the Meeting of Experts adopted as its rules of procedure, *mutatis mutandis*, the rules of procedure of the Eighth Review Conference, as contained in document BWC/CONF.VIII/2.

7. Mr. Daniel Feakes, Chief, Implementation Support Unit, Office for Disarmament Affairs, Geneva, served as Secretary of the Meeting of Experts. Mr. Hermann Lampalzer, Political Affairs Officer, Implementation Support Unit, served as Deputy Secretary and Ms. Ngoc Phuong van der Blij, Political Affairs Officer, also served in the secretariat.

## III. Participation at the Meeting of Experts

8. Ninety-six delegations participated in the Meeting of Experts as follows: Algeria; Angola; Argentina; Armenia; Australia; Austria; Azerbaijan; Barbados; Belarus; Belgium; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Botswana; Brazil; Brunei Darussalam; Bulgaria; Canada; Chile; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; Czech Republic; Democratic Republic of Congo; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Estonia; Finland; France; Georgia; Germany; Ghana; Guyana; Holy See; Hungary; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Iraq; Ireland; Italy; Japan; Kazakhstan; Kenya; Kuwait; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Lebanon; Libya; Lithuania; Madagascar; Malaysia; Mauritius; Mexico; Montenegro; Morocco; Myanmar; Nepal; Netherlands; Nigeria; North Macedonia; Norway; Pakistan; Panama; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Qatar; Republic of Korea; Romania; Russian Federation; Saudi Arabia; Senegal; Serbia; Sierra Leone; Slovakia; Slovenia; South Africa; Spain; Sri Lanka; State of Palestine; Sudan; Sweden; Switzerland; Thailand; Togo; Tunisia; Turkey; Ukraine; United Arab Emirates; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United States of America; Uruguay; Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of); Yemen; Zambia; and Zimbabwe.

9. In addition, one State that had signed the Convention but had not yet ratified it participated in the Meeting of Experts without taking part in the making of decisions, as provided for in rule 44, paragraph 1 of the rules of procedure: Egypt.

10. Two States, Chad and Israel, neither parties nor signatories to the Convention, participated in the Meeting of Experts as observers, in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 2.

11. The United Nations, including the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the United Nations Office of

<sup>1</sup> See the letters from the Chair of the 2020 Meeting of States Parties dated 28 July 2020, 23 November 2020 and 9 February 2021.

Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) attended the Meeting of Experts in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 3.

12. The European Union (EU), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the World Health Organization (WHO) were granted observer status to participate in the Meeting of Experts in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 4.

13. Twelve non-governmental organizations and research institutes attended the Meeting of Experts under rule 44, paragraph 5.

14. A list of all participants in the Meeting of Experts is contained in document [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/INF.1](#).

#### **IV. Work of the Meeting of Experts**

15. In accordance with the provisional agenda ([BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/1](#)) and an annotated programme of work prepared by the Chair, the Meeting of Experts had substantive discussions on the issues allocated by the 2017 Meeting of States Parties.

16. Under agenda item 4 (“Practical challenges facing the implementation of Article VII, and possible solutions”), there was an interactive discussion on the agenda item in which the following States Parties participated: Canada; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Iraq; Japan; Pakistan; and the United States of America. The European Union made a statement. Various views were expressed during the consideration of this agenda item.

17. Under agenda item 5 (“A set of guidelines and formats to assist a State Party, if required, when submitting an application for assistance in the framework of Article VII”), there was an interactive discussion on the agenda item in which the following States Parties participated: Cuba; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Russian Federation; Switzerland; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; and United States of America. Various views were expressed during the consideration of this agenda item.

18. Under agenda item 6 (“Procedures, including the establishment and use of the assistance database, to improve the prompt and efficient response without preconditions to a request of assistance by a State Party under Article VII, and coordination and cooperation among States Parties and with relevant international and regional organizations such as World Health Organization (WHO), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), as appropriate”), France and India introduced a joint working paper ([BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/WP.3](#) and [Corr.1](#)). The World Health Organization made a technical presentation. There then followed an interactive discussion on the agenda item in which the following States Parties participated: Brazil; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Russian Federation; Switzerland; United States of America; and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Various views were expressed during the consideration of this agenda item.

19. Under agenda item 7 (“Examination of how the concept of mobile biomedical units might contribute to effective assistance, response and preparation with a view to enhancing implementation of the Convention”), the Russian Federation introduced a working paper ([BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/WP.2](#)). There then followed an interactive discussion on the agenda item in which the following States Parties participated: Brazil; Canada; China; Cuba; France; Russian Federation; Switzerland; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United States of America. Various views were expressed during the consideration of this agenda item.

20. Under agenda item 8 (“Exploration of approaches by which States Parties, individually or collectively, might contribute to the strengthening of international response capabilities for infectious disease outbreaks, whether natural or deliberate in origin”), Japan and Germany introduced working papers ([BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/WP.1](#) and [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/WP.5](#) respectively). Sri Lanka made a technical presentation. There then followed an interactive discussion on the agenda item in which the following States

Parties participated: Brazil; China; Germany; Japan; Mexico; Switzerland; Ukraine; and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the World Health Organization (WHO) made statements. Various views were expressed during the consideration of this agenda item.

21. Under agenda item 9 (“Exploration of means to prepare for, respond to and render assistance in case of the possible hostile use of biological agents and toxins against agriculture, livestock as well as the natural environment”), the United States of America introduced a working paper (BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/WP.4\*). There then followed an interactive discussion on the agenda item in which the following States Parties participated: [...]. The [...] also made statements. Various views were expressed during the consideration of this agenda item.

22. In the course of its work, the Meeting of Experts was able to draw on a number of working papers submitted by States Parties, as well as on statements and presentations made by States Parties and international organizations which were circulated in the Meeting.

23. The Chair, under her own responsibility and initiative, has prepared a paper listing considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals drawn from the presentations, statements, working papers and interventions on the agenda items under discussion at the Meeting. The Meeting of Experts noted that this paper had not been agreed and had no status. It was the Chair’s view that the paper could assist delegations in their preparations for the Meeting of States Parties in November 2021 and also in their consideration of how best to “discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action on” the topics in accordance with the consensus reached at the 2017 Meeting of States Parties. The paper prepared by the Chair, in consultation with States Parties, is attached as Annex I to this report.

## **V. Documentation**

24. A list of official documents of the Meeting of Experts, including the working papers submitted by States Parties, is contained in Annex II to this report. All documents on this list are available on the BWC website at <https://meetings.unoda.org/section/bwc-mx-2020-mx4-documents/> and through the United Nations Official Document System (ODS), at <http://documents.un.org>.

## **VI. Conclusion of the Meeting of Experts**

25. At its closing meeting on 7 September 2021, the Meeting of Experts adopted its report by consensus, as contained in document BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/CRP.1 as orally amended, to be issued as document BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/2.

## **Annex I**

### **Summary report**

**Submitted by the Chairperson of the 2020 Meeting of Experts on Assistance, Response and Preparedness**

[...]

## Annex II

### List of documents of the 2020 Meeting of Experts on Assistance, Response and Preparedness

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/1	Provisional Agenda for the 2020 Meeting of Experts on Assistance, Response and Preparedness - Submitted by the Chairperson
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/CRP.1 English only	Draft Report of the 2020 Meeting of Experts on Assistance, Response and Preparedness – Submitted by the Chairperson
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/MISC.1 English/French/Spanish only	Provisional list of participants
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/WP.1 English only	Strengthening National, Sub-Regional and International Capacities to Prepare for and Respond to the Deliberate Use of Biological Weapons: Project update – Submitted by Japan
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/WP.2 English and Russian only	Strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention Operationalising mobile biomedical units to deliver protection against biological weapons, investigate their alleged use, and to suppress epidemics of various etiology – Submitted by the Russian Federation
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/WP.3 English and French only	Proposal for the establishment of a database for assistance under Article VII of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention: specific pending issues and way forward for the operationalization of the proposal – Submitted by India and France
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/WP.3/Corr.1 English and French only	Proposal for the establishment of a database for assistance under Article VII of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention: specific pending issues and way forward for the operationalization of the proposal – Submitted by India and France
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/WP.4* English only	Lessons Learned in International Cooperation and Assistance from an Agricultural Incident – Submitted by the United States of America
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/WP.5 English only	Strengthening Capacities in Responding to and Preparing for the Deliberate Use of Biological Weapons: Lessons Learned from UNSGM Table Top Exercise 2020 and Outlook to the Capstone Field Exercise – Submitted by Germany