
Presentation of Findings of Workshops on Modalities of a BWC Scientific Advisory Process

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WHY A SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY PROCESS?

Dramatic advances in science and technology, in particular biotechnology, prompted many BWC States Parties to call for a systematic scientific advisory process to provide timely advice.

Technical developments include bioweapons risks and peaceful benefits such as gene editing, gene synthesis, gene drives, record progress in vaccines, which could have implications for the Convention.

Ensure that all States Parties have impartial technical assessments of developments in science and technology relevant to the Convention, thereby enabling all BWC States Parties to make informed decisions

Strengthen the brief consideration provided in the annual Meetings of Experts and the five-year Review Conferences.

WORKSHOPS

Workshop 1: March 2021

- **Areas of Convergence**
- **Areas of Divergence**

Workshop 2: June/July 2021

- **Developing Solutions**

SUMMARY

- **Workshops showed that thinking about an S&T advisory mechanism has evolved in a positive way in the last year**
- **Broad support for a scientific advisory body by participants from all UN Regional Groups**
- **Priority to achieve consensus at the 2022 Review Conference**
- **Four general categories of issues:**
Mandate, Composition, Independence, and Resources

SCOPE OF WORK

- **Provide advice on the implications of the dramatic advances in science and technology, in particular biotechnology, for the Convention.**
- **Briefings and reports with clear recommendations**
 - **Assessments cover potential risks and benefits of advances in science and technology (disease surveillance, diagnosis and mitigation)**
 - **Specific interest in agriculture, food security, gene editing**
- **Draw on expertise from a broad range of countries and relevant technical specialties**
- **Work by consensus**

COMPOSITION: the most complex issue

Who should participate?

Open-ended, limited to e.g. 20, or possible compromise between the two?

Membership priorities: expertise, diversity, independence, affordability, geographic and gender balance

COMPOSITION OPTIONS

- **Hybrid Option 1: Open Body**
 - **Open to all States Parties**
 - **Sub-groups optional**

- **Hybrid Option 2: Two-Part Body**
 - **Group open to all States Parties**
 - **Standing Advisory Panel of 25 members**

- **Hybrid Option 3: Open Body with Committee**
 - **One-week meeting open to all States Parties**
 - **S&T Committee of 20 experts (UNIDIR)**

INDEPENDENCE

- **Selected through impartial process**
- **Work in individual capacity**
- **Meetings not open to observers**

RESOURCES: fundamental to success

Finance Ministries need to support the creation of an advisory body

Many states would see only a nominal increase in their assessed contributions (UNIDIR study estimates less than \$100 for many States Parties)

- **Assessed contributions:**
 - **One meeting per year**
 - **Staff member hired in the ISU**
 - **Limited travel support**
- **Voluntary contributions:**
 - **Additional meetings**
 - **Temporary Working Groups**
 - **Additional travel support.**

CONCLUSIONS

- **Broad support to establish a scientific advisory body at the Review Conference**
- **FAS stands ready to facilitate efforts to reach a consensus outcome at the 2022 Review Conference**