

**Biological Weapons Convention**

**2020 Meeting of States Parties**

**22-25 November 2021**

**Preparatory Committee for the Ninth Review Conference**

**26 and 29 November 2021**



**United Nations Office at Geneva**

**Palais des Nations**

**Geneva, Switzerland**

## Introduction

1. The 2020 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) will take place from 22 to 25 November 2021 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Meeting of States Parties will consider the factual reports of the Meetings of Experts which took place in August and September 2021, as well as a report from the Chairperson on universalization activities and the annual report of the Implementation Support Unit. The Meeting of States Parties is also 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.
2. The Meeting of States Parties will be chaired by Ambassador Cleopa Kilonzo Mailu of Kenya.
3. The Meeting of States Parties will be held in-person in Room XIX, in the E Building of the Palais des Nations, United Nations Office at Geneva, accessible via the Pregny Gate. Sessions will take place from 10:00-13:00 and 15:00-18:00 on the abovementioned dates.
4. The provisional agenda and provisional programme of work for the Meeting of States Parties are available online at <https://meetings.unoda.org/section/bwc-msp-2020-documents/> Additional documentation and other information will be posted, as it becomes available, in the same place.
5. The first session of the Preparatory Committee for the Ninth Review Conference remains as originally planned on 26 and 29 November 2021, subject to availability of a conference room on 29 November, immediately following the conclusion of the 2020 Meeting of States Parties. The Preparatory Committee will be held in-person in Room XIX of the Palais des Nations.
6. The official pre-session documentation for the Preparatory Committee will be posted at <https://meetings.unoda.org/section/bwc-prepcom-2021-documents/> when it becomes available. Additional documentation and other information will be posted, as it becomes available, in the same place.
7. This document has been prepared by the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and provides practical information for participants in the Meeting of States Parties and the Preparatory Committee. The information contained in this document was correct at the time of writing (25 October 2021).

## Registration

8. Formal credentials are not required for the Meeting of States Parties or the Preparatory Committee. Instead, all participants need to be registered by **12 November 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 delegations for both meetings. 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 Meeting of States Parties and the Preparatory Committee.

- 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 delegations for both meetings. 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 Meeting of States Parties and the Preparatory Committee.
  - c. In accordance with Rule 44.2(a), **States which are neither parties nor signatories to the Convention** may apply to participate in the Meeting of States Parties and the Preparatory Committee as Observer States. Observer status is granted by the decision of the meetings at their opening sessions. 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 for both meetings. 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 Meeting of States Parties and the Preparatory Committee.
  - d. In accordance with Rule 44.4, **international organizations** may apply to participate in the Meeting of States Parties and the Preparatory Committee as observer agencies. Observer agency status is granted by the decision of the meetings, 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 for both meetings. 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 Meeting of States Parties and the Preparatory Committee.
  - e. In accordance with Rule 44.5, **NGOs and academic institutions** may register to attend public sessions of the Meeting of States Parties and the Preparatory Committee. 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 Meeting of States Parties and the Preparatory Committee.
9. 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.

10. *Notes verbales* and letters should be submitted no later than **12 November 2021**.

## Access to the Palais des Nations

11. 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/20126/> by **12 November 2021**. Registration is required for all participants by the Swiss authorities for COVID-19 contact tracing purposes. Registration for the Meeting of States Parties will also cover participation in the Preparatory Committee so that participants will only need to collect one security badge.
12. 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 Meeting of States Parties.
13. Participants registering for the first time will need to provide details of their passport or national identification card and upload a passport quality photo.
14. 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.
15. A [user guide](#) is available for reference. For any queries, please contact the Implementation Support Unit at [bwc@un.org](mailto:bwc@un.org)
16. 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.
17. Delegations from States and international organisations can collect their security badges from the Pregny Gate as of 12:00 on 19 November 2021. Please bring a copy of the delegation's letter or *note verbale* or the UN Event Pass received after your successful online registration in order to facilitate the process.
18. NGO representatives can collect their badges in person from 08:00 on 22 November 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.
19. For security reasons, identification badges must always be worn and visible to UN Security staff while inside the Palais des Nations.

## Attending the Meeting of States Parties and the Preparatory Committee

20. All formal sessions of the Meeting of States Parties will be held in-person in Room XIX from 22-25 November in the E Building of the Palais des Nations (see map below). All formal sessions of the Preparatory Committee will be held in-person in Room XIX on 26 November and 29 November, subject to availability of a conference room. Details of the meetings scheduled for each day can be found on the screens opposite Door 40 in the E Building.

21. 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](#).
22. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the following measures<sup>1</sup> 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 online at <https://indico.un.org/event/20126/>, 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.
23. Further information on UNOG measures to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic is available below in paragraphs 41 and 42.
24. All public sessions of the Meeting of States Parties and the Preparatory Committee 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. UN Web TV can be accessed without prior registration. Live audio from the Meeting of States Parties and the Preparatory Committee 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](#).
25. An up-to-date timetable of events, including formal meetings, side events and informal sessions will be available at <https://meetings.unoda.org/meeting/bwc-msp-2020/> and <https://meetings.unoda.org/meeting/bwc-prepcom-2021/>
26. 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.
27. 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**

28. Prior to the Meeting of States Parties, pre-session documents will be made available on the <https://meetings.unoda.org/section/bwc-msp-2020-documents/> The provisional agenda ([BWC/MSP/2020/1](#)) and provisional programme of work ([BWC/MSP/2020/2](#)) for the Meeting of States Parties are already available in all official languages. Official pre-session documents for the Preparatory Committee will be posted at

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<sup>1</sup> These are the measures applicable at the time of writing on 22 October 2021. They may change by the time of the Meeting of States Parties. Participants are therefore recommended to regularly check the [UNODA Meetings Place](#).

<https://meetings.unoda.org/section/bwc-prepcom-2021-documents/> as they become available.

29. States Parties wishing to submit working papers to the Meeting of States Parties or to the Preparatory Committee, should do so by **12 November 2021** by sending Microsoft Word versions to [bwc@un.org](mailto:bwc@un.org) Please get in touch 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.
30. States and international organizations granted observer status might also wish to provide information to delegations at the Meeting of States Parties or the Preparatory Committee. Documents should be submitted in electronic and hard copy to the ISU. Electronic copies should be sent to [bwc@un.org](mailto:bwc@un.org)
31. During the Meeting of States Parties in-session documents will be made available at <https://meetings.unoda.org/section/bwc-msp-2020-documents/> as they are issued. During the Preparatory Committee in-session documents will be made available at <https://meetings.unoda.org/section/bwc-prepcom-2021-documents/> Paper copies of documents will not be issued in the conference room.

### **Presentations and interventions**

32. Delegations can deliver national statements, introduce working papers and make interventions from the floor. In addition, it will also be possible for pre-recorded statements to be shown during the general debate. Delegations wishing to take the floor during the Meeting of States Parties or the Preparatory Committee are requested to contact the Implementation Support Unit, particularly those wishing to have pre-recorded statements to be shown during the general debate. Copies of statements, presentations etc should be sent to the Implementation Support Unit at [bwc@un.org](mailto:bwc@un.org) In order to assist the interpreters, copies of national statements, presentations and interventions should also be sent to [speeches@un.org](mailto:speeches@un.org)
33. Practical information for speakers and participants in the Meeting of States Parties and the Preparatory Committee can be found at <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/conference-management/participant>

### **Side events**

34. 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. However, virtual side events can be arranged by the organizers and the Implementation Support Unit will compile a list of all such events communicated to it and make it available online.
35. 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**

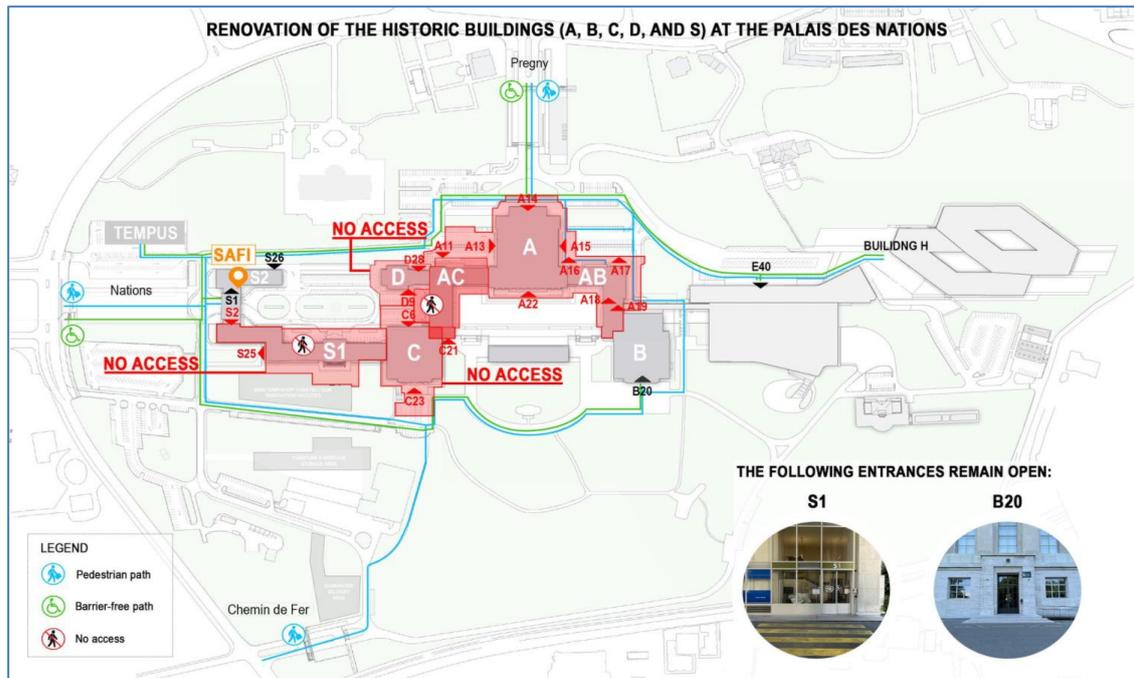
36. The availability of private meetings for regional groups or other groups of States Parties will depend on room availability. Regional group coordinators are invited to contact the Implementation Support Unit well in advance. The Implementation Support Unit will assist the coordinators of the different 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.
37. Free wifi access is available in the meeting rooms and generally throughout the Palais des Nations.
38. Photocopying facilities will not be available to participants.
39. The closest cafeteria is the Serpent Bar which can be found behind Room XVIII on the first floor of the E Building. The main cafeteria in the Palais des Nations has also recently re-opened.
40. A UBS bank is located at Door 41 on the second floor of Building E (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**

41. Participants should note that travel restrictions are currently in place in Switzerland due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Persons wishing to participate in the Meeting of States Parties and the Preparatory Committee are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the requirements regarding entry to Switzerland prior to travel.
42. 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 Meeting of States Parties and the Preparatory Committee and can be contacted on [elena.orlyk@un.org](mailto:elena.orlyk@un.org)

## **Practical information**

43. The Palais des Nations is currently undergoing major renovations under the Strategic Heritage Plan and much of the building is therefore currently inaccessible. The map below shows the sections of the Palais which are closed and also shows the temporary routes to access the E Building from the Nations and Pregny gates. More information is available at <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/about/map/circulation>



44. 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>

### Hotel accommodation and visas

45. The ISU cannot offer financial or logistical support to assist with travel to, accommodation during, or other costs related to attending the Meeting of States Parties and the Preparatory Committee. Practical information about accommodation in Geneva can be found on the website of the [Geneva Welcome Centre](#).

46. 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

47. 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.

48. 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.

49. 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.
50. The [Model Code of Conduct](#) applies to all participants of any BWC meetings.

### **Secretariat**

51. Further enquiries regarding attendance and participation in the Meeting of States Parties and the Preparatory Committee 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](mailto:bwc@un.org)