Biological Weapons Convention
Preparatory Committee for the Ninth Review Conference
20 December 2021

United Nations Office at Geneva
Palais des Nations
Geneva, Switzerland
Introduction

1. The Preparatory Committee for the Ninth BWC Review Conference will meet on 20 December 2021 in Geneva, Switzerland. As agreed by the Meeting of States Parties, this meeting will consider the agenda items on the organizational aspects of the Review Conference.

2. The Preparatory Committee will be opened by a representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs.

3. The Preparatory Committee 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 date.

4. Official pre-session documents for the Preparatory Committee are available online in all official UN languages at https://meetings.unoda.org/section/bwc-prepcom-2021-documents/ Additional documentation and other information will be posted, as it becomes available, in the same place.

5. This document has been prepared by the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and provides practical information for participants in the Preparatory Committee. The information contained in this document was correct at the time of writing (6 December 2021).

Registration

6. Formal credentials are not required for the Preparatory Committee. Instead, all participants need to be registered by 15 December 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 the meeting. 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 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 the meeting. 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 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 Preparatory Committee as Observer States. Observer status is granted by the decision of the meeting at its 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 for the meeting. 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 Preparatory Committee.

d. In accordance with Rule 44.4, international organizations may apply to participate in the Preparatory Committee as observer agencies. Observer agency status is granted by the decision of the meeting, which will consider and decide on requests for observer agency status at its opening session. 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 the meeting. 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 Preparatory Committee.

e. In accordance with Rule 44.5, NGOs and academic institutions may register to attend public sessions of 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 meeting 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 Preparatory Committee.

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 15 December 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/35464/ by 15 December 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 Preparatory Committee.

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 17 December 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.

16. NGO representatives can collect their badges in person from 08:00 on 20 December 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 Preparatory Committee**

18. All formal sessions of the Preparatory Committee will be held in-person in Room XIX on 20 December. Details of the meeting sessions can be found on the screens opposite Door 40 in the E Building.

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.

20. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the following measures 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/35464](https://indico.un.org/event/35464), 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 37 and 38.

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1 These are the measures applicable at the time of writing on 6 December 2021. They may change by the time of the Preparatory Committee. Participants are therefore recommended to regularly check the UNODA Meetings Place.
22. All public sessions of 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 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.

23. 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-prepcom-2021/

24. Electronic boards outside the 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. Official pre-session documents for the Preparatory Committee are available in all official UN languages at https://meetings.unoda.org/section/bwc-prepcom-2021-documents/ Additional documents will be posted on the webpage as they become available.

27. States Parties wishing to submit working papers to the Preparatory Committee, should do so by 15 December 2021 by sending Microsoft Word versions to 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.

28. States and international organizations granted observer status might also wish to provide information to delegations at the Preparatory Committee. Documents should be submitted in electronic and hard copy to the ISU. Electronic copies should be sent to bwc@un.org

29. 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

30. Due to the short duration of this meeting of the Preparatory Committee, there will be no general debate. Delegations wishing to take the floor during the Preparatory Committee can simply raise their nameplates and will be given the floor in turn. If delegations have prepared statements, copies should be sent to the Implementation Support Unit at bwc@un.org In order to assist the interpreters, copies should also be sent to speeches@un.org

31. Practical information for speakers and participants in the Preparatory Committee can be found at https://www.ungeneva.org/en/conference-management/participant
Rooms and facilities for participants

32. 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.

33. Free wifi access is available in the meeting rooms and generally throughout the Palais des Nations.

34. Photocopying facilities will not be available to participants.

35. 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.

36. 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

37. Participants should note that travel restrictions are currently in place in Switzerland due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All persons entering Switzerland, including those who have been vaccinated or have recovered, must undertake a pre-departure PCR test. In addition, a second test, either PCR or antigenic, must be performed between the fourth and seventh day after arrival. Persons wishing to participate in the Preparatory Committee are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the requirements regarding entry to Switzerland prior to travel.

38. 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 Preparatory Committee and can be contacted on elena.orlyk@un.org

Practical information

39. 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
40. 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

41. The ISU cannot offer financial or logistical support to assist with travel to, accommodation during, or other costs related to attending the Preparatory Committee. Practical information about accommodation in Geneva can be found on the website of the Geneva Welcome Centre.

42. 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

43. 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.

44. 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.
45. 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.

46. The Model Code of Conduct applies to all participants of any BWC meetings.

Secretariat

47. Further enquiries regarding attendance and participation in the Preparatory Committee should be addressed to:

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United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
United Nations Office at Geneva
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Email: bwc@un.org