Kenya’s National implementation of BWC

The Global Partnership’s Signature Initiative to Mitigate Biological Threats in Africa

The importance of strengthening the domestic implementation of the BWC in Africa including its universalization

Walter Oyawa
NACOSTI
Kenya acknowledges that Biological threats exist as demonstrated by an incident in 2016, when Kenyan security agencies announced that they had successfully foiled a plan by a group of medical interns to unleash a biological terror attack using anthrax bacteria as a weapon against Kenyans. The incident aroused public interest, and placed focus on matters of BWC.
Kenya’s Steadfast participation in BWC

Kenya has been steadfast in demonstrating her commitment to the Biological Weapons Convention since acceding to the Convention on the 7th January 1976. As part of conforming to the requirements of the Convention, Kenya has been promptly submitting a report of its Confidence Building Measures as is required. This is done annually through the National Focal or Contact Point of BWC, that is the Director General-NACOSTI.
Further, Kenya has appointed BWC Desk officers in Ministries, and Departments of Government, as well as in Semi-Autonomous State Agencies.

The role of Desk Officers is to:

(i) facilitate submission of CBMs by their institutions to the National Focal Point/Director General NACOSTI,
(ii) Sensitize management and staff in their institutions on BWC matters
(iii) Participate in conferences, research, etc as pertains to the Convention
Kenya’s Steadfast participation in BWC (cont’d)

- Last year on the 1st April 2021, a national sensitization workshop was organized for BWC Desk Officers and stakeholders jointly between BWC-ISU and Kenya’s National Focal Point. Lead Speakers were the Chair of 2020 Meeting of States Parties, the Head of BWC-IUS Mr. Daniel Feakes, and the National Focal Point.

- The workshop, even though organized within a short notice, attracted over 100 officers from over 36 Government/State institutions.

- The Workshop has since generated massive interest, and has contributed to Kenya sending the largest ever Delegation to PrepCOM comprising 17 Delegates, five of whom are Chief Executive Officers of their Institutions. Further, we were able to capture more data in the 2021 CBM submission than in all the previous years.

- We call upon States Parties and BWC-ISU to join us in promoting and facilitating the role of Institutional BWC Desk Officers.
Kenya’s Steadfast participation in BWC (cont’d)

- Kenya has also engaged our partners in the East African Community as part of Universalization Efforts.
- Last year from 27th to 29th October 2021, the National Focal Point invited the BWC-ISU to present to participants during the 2nd Science, Technology and Innovation Conference organized by the East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO) in Burundi, which had High-Level participants drawn from Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi.
Kenya’s Steadfast participation in BWC (cont’d)

- Most recently, last month, Kenya organized a Youth Workshop jointly with BWC-ISU.

Mobilizing youth to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention in Kenya

*Online event - 24 March 2022 | 16:00 – 18:00 (EAT – Nairobi time)*
Kenya’s Interests/priorities – relating to BWC

1. Mapping out of BWC infrastructure and human capital.
2. National Biosecurity strategy:
3. Experience sharing on Biosecurity matters:
4. Strengthening the youth capacity on biosecurity matters:
5. Regional coordination to support Universalisation:
6. Cross border monitoring:
7. Invasive Weeds, pests, pesticides, and diseases;
8. Capacity building for champions and desk officers of BWC
Kenya is at the frontline in implementing the BWC and looks forward to collaboration and cooperation with States Parties.