

**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**

Geneva, 14-18 December 2015

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To the Permanent Representatives in Geneva of the
States Parties and Signatories to the Convention on the Prohibition
of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological
(Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction

19 October 2015

Excellency,

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION: 2015 MEETING OF STATES PARTIES

I am writing once again in order to update you on preparations for the Meeting of States Parties, which will be held at the Palais des Nations from 14 to 18 December 2015.

I would like to thank you for your cooperation and active support during the Meeting of Experts held from 10 to 14 August. On this occasion, we held a rich discussion on the three standing agenda items and the biennial topic. A compilation of the many ideas and proposals put forward by delegations in the course of these discussions was annexed to the Report of the Meeting of Experts (BWC/MSP/2015/MX/3, now available on the BWC website in all UN languages).

Our task now is to take this wealth of information and ideas and consider how we might transform it into common understandings and effective action at the Meeting of States Parties.

Synthesis paper

As promised, to help us prepare for the Meeting of States Parties, I have distilled the ideas and proposals made at the Meeting of Experts into a synthesis paper. I do this under my own responsibility and attached here for your consideration. Naturally, not every detail of every proposal has been included, but I have tried to cover the main themes and capture at least the essence of the various ideas put forward.

I hope you will find the synthesis paper useful for your preparations for the Meeting of States Parties. As in previous years, I have focused on identifying new material contributed at this year's Meeting of Experts. I have tried to avoid repeating ideas and proposals on which we

have already identified a common understanding. Please read the attached synthesis paper in conjunction with the reports of the previous Meetings of States Parties of the current intersessional programme, which should also be seen as an input into our preparations for the 2015 Meeting of States Parties.

I'm planning to meet each of the regional groups in the week of 16 November to seek the regional views on the Synthesis Paper. In light of your views, I will assess whether there is value in revising my synthesis paper to provide a better platform for the Meeting of States Parties.

Provisional agenda and programme of work

I have also prepared a provisional agenda and programme of work (attached) for the Meeting of States Parties, both closely based on those from previous Meetings of State Parties. An additional item on arrangements for the 8th Review Conference is also included. The documents are available on the BWC website. I trust that both these documents are acceptable to delegations.

Updates and submissions

As part of the preparations for the Meeting of States Parties, I would like to encourage delegations to consider supporting the BWC sponsorship programme and coordinate with the ISU in this regard, to check and update if necessary their national contact point for the BWC, to submit any offers or requests for assistance to the database maintained by the ISU and to provide, or update, their report on the implementation of Article X.

Universalization

I would also like to encourage States Parties to submit any information or feedback on contacts with states not party to the Convention, in the interest of promoting universality. As you know, all the efforts by the Chairman, States Parties and the ISU will be included in my report on universalisation to be submitted to the Meeting of States Parties. Consequently, I would like to request States Parties to provide me with any information they may have on their own universalization efforts and on any progress that may have been achieved.

Confidence Building Measures

In accordance with understandings reached at the 2012 and 2013 Meetings of States Parties, I would like to remind you of the call by the Seventh Review Conference for States Parties to participate annually in the exchange of information through the Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs). The Seventh Review Conference emphasized the importance of this exchange of information and the importance of increasing and continuing participation in the CBMs.

I am pleased to inform you that as of 19 October 2015 a total of 69 submissions covering calendar year 2014 have already been submitted. Although the official submission deadline of 15 April 2015 has passed, submissions covering 2014 can still be made and I encourage those States Parties yet to submit to do so as soon as possible. States Parties can consider voluntarily making all, or part, of their CBM returns public. CBMs can be submitted to the

ISU via post (at the address below), by fax (at the number above) or by e-mail (to bwc@unog.ch).

More information on the CBMs, including the necessary forms, can be found on the BWC website at <http://www.unog.ch/bwc/cbms>. A *Guide to Participating in the Confidence-Building Measures*, prepared by the ISU with the support of the European Union, is available in all official languages at the same address. In addition, at least three States Parties have offered assistance in the compilation and submission of CBMs. Details of these offers are listed in the Assistance and Cooperation Database on the BWC website at <http://www.unog.ch/bwc/database>. The ISU remains at your disposal to answer any enquiries about the CBMs, and to help obtain any assistance your government might require in the compilation and submission of the CBMs.

In accordance with the understanding at the 2013 Meeting of States Parties, I would also like to take this opportunity to request States Parties to provide information on issues affecting their participation in the CBMs.

ISU staffing

I have been informed by the Chief of the ISU that UNODA has finalized the recruitment of the P3 and P4 posts in the ISU. Ms Ngoc Phuong van der Blij has been selected for the P3 post and Mr Hermann Lampalzer has been selected for the P4 post. We should receive further information on these appointments from Mr Feakes at the next Regional Group meetings.

Outcome of the Meeting of States Parties

In accordance with our mandate, we will be working together to promote common understanding and effective action on the substantive items of the agenda. As this is the last year in this current intersessional programme, we also need to frame our discussions with a view to the Eighth Review Conference in 2016. I would expect the report of the Meeting of States Parties to closely resemble those adopted in previous years. I believe that this approach offers the best opportunity to preserve the appropriate balance between our substantive agenda items, provide us with a platform for effective action, and will help us attain the most substantive outcome possible.

Next steps

As mentioned earlier, I would like to meet each of the regional groups in the week of 16 November. I am also looking forward to bilateral consultations with delegations, and I invite you to contact me if you would like to discuss any aspect of the preparations for the Meeting of States Parties. I am particularly interested in hearing specific feedback on the attached synthesis paper so that I can revise it in a timely manner. I also plan to conduct informal discussion with delegation if you so wish.

Thank you again for your collaboration and support; I look forward to working with you to reach common understandings and promote effective action at the Meeting of States Parties in December.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Mazlan Muhammad
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of
Malaysia to the UN and other International
Organisations
Chairman of the BWC Meeting of States Parties

Attachments: (1) synthesis paper
(2) provisional programme of work for the Meeting of States Parties