

**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, 4-7 December 2018

Secretariat:
BWC Implementation Support Unit
United Nations Office for Disarmament
Affairs (Geneva Branch)
Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

tel: +41 (0)22 917 2230
fax: +41 (0)22 917 0483
e-mail: bwc@unog.ch
web: <http://www.unog.ch/bwc>

To the Permanent Representatives 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

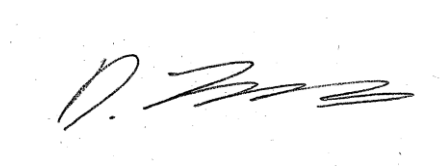
2 May 2018

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION: LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Excellency,

I have the honour to convey the attached letter from the Chairman of the 2018 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, Mr. Ljupčo Jivan Gjorgjinski, of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

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



Daniel Feakes
Chief, BWC Implementation Support Unit



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

TO THE UN, WTO AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN GENEVA

Nº 16 - 01 - 171 / 3

Geneva, 02 May 2018

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION 2018 MEETING OF STATES PARTIES

Excellency,

I am writing to you again in my capacity as Chair of the 2018 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

We stand at a critical juncture of the intercessional programme, even if this is not immediately self-evident. The focus and quality of discussions during the Meetings of Experts (MXs) in August will influence the outcome of the Meeting of States Parties (MSP) in December. They will also set a standard for the MXs of the following two years. All of this sets the tone for the Ninth Review Conference in 2021.

A clear roadmap to the MXs and the MSP can reduce unnecessary ambiguity. Conversely, lack of clarity on what we should do and how we should do it may produce ambiguous results in return. Indeed, the regional consultations in which I participated on 14 and 15 March 2018 demonstrated *strong support for a consistent approach in our work* over the next few months.

I am pleased that Ambassador Maria Teresa Almojuela of the Philippines has been confirmed as the Chair of MX1 and has already started her work and that Ambassador Julio Herráiz España of Spain has been nominated as the Chair of MX3. However, we still need Chairs for MX2, MX4 and MX5 so I do hope that regional groups inform the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) of nominations as soon as possible. I have made a proposal for an interim solution to all regional groups, to have a temporary co-chairmanship of their regional coordinator, myself and a respected member of their group – who would decide by consensus any issues at hand – until a Chair is nominated from within their respective group.

To: The Permanent Representatives 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



Each MX Chair will set the parameters of their respective meeting, but all Meetings should work with a similar tempo. I would therefore like to suggest the following approach.

The first phase is to unearth anew what the States Parties view as important for each of the MXs – a stocktaking exercise of the topics and possibilities to be covered in each MX. I thus encourage all States Parties to transmit their views, to myself and the ISU by 25 May 2018, highlighting which issues and approaches they see as relevant to be discussed during each MX from those listed in last year's MSP report. These informal inputs can be on one MX or all, submitted individually or in groups. The views submitted by States Parties will form an important part of a dossier put together for each MX Chair.¹

The other part of such a dossier will be a summary brief that I have asked the ISU to prepare for each MX, providing the institutional memory, the issues that have previously been highlighted and any relevant knowledge that may be useful. The full dossier will be given to each Chair by 1 June 2018. In this first phase, I would also appreciate meeting again with the regional groups to gather more inputs for this stocktaking exercise. MX Chairs who are already in place may also find it useful to start discussing preparations for their particular MX with delegations.

The second phase is then in the hands of each MX Chair, who may wish to put together a Concept Paper for their respective Meeting. States Parties will then be able to submit formal working papers – individually or in groups – within the framework of the provisional agenda for each MX, which will be submitted by the MX Chairs well in advance of each Meeting.

The third phase will consist of the holding of MX1 through MX5 themselves, from 7-16 August 2018. Upon their conclusion, the Chair of each MX should produce a balanced factual report reflecting its deliberations, including possible outcomes.

Another point that was evident during the consultations with the regional groups is that the MXs should be exactly what their title implies: *meetings of experts*, focused on technical topics. The short time allocated for each MX does not allow for a general debate item to take place during the MXs. However, there will of course be ample time for political statements during the MSP in December. Let us allow the experts to focus on expert issues.

As August is fast approaching, I would encourage States Parties to begin thinking about the composition of their delegations to the MXs, particularly given the expert nature of the Meetings. In this respect, I would like to remind States Parties that the

¹ These inputs will also be available to the Chairs of future MXs, with the possibility for additional or updated information to be included in subsequent years.

applications to the Sponsorship Programme are now open, as announced in the ISU's letter dated 24 April 2018. Further information is available at www.unog.ch/bwc/sponsorship. I would also like to encourage States Parties to give due attention to issues relating to gender balance when forming their delegations and planning speaking roles.

I would like to thank all those States Parties that have already paid their assessed contributions for 2018. However, as can be seen in the latest monthly update on the BWC website, there is still a significant amount outstanding for 2018. Some states parties are several years behind. This may have serious implications for the MSP later in the year, and for the continuation of the ISU in the future. I would therefore once again like to strongly urge all States Parties to pay their outstanding contributions as soon as possible so that we can fully implement the agreement reached at the MSP in 2017.

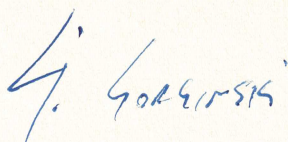
The ISU has informed me that they have received 50 Confidence-Building Measure (CBM) reports covering 2017. As you will be aware, the deadline for submission was 15 April 2018, so I would encourage States Parties who have not yet done so to submit their CBM reports at the earliest possible opportunity. Further details were provided in the letter from the ISU dated 2 March 2018.

I am pleased that several States Parties are planning to organize meetings and workshops on some of the topics to be discussed at the MXs. Any initiatives that can provide an informal space in which to discuss ideas and proposals in advance of the MXs, especially within the parameters set by each MX Chair, may provide significant added value to the quality of the meetings in general.

* * * * *

In closing, let me echo the sentiment previously expressed of a unique opportunity to work constructively towards a strengthened Biological Weapons Convention. Such opportunities are seized at junctures such as the one ahead.

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



Ljupčo Jivan Gjorgjinski

Minister Counselor and *Chargé d'Affaires*

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Macedonia in Geneva

Chair of the 2018 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention