

**2009 Meeting**

**Geneva, 7-11 December 2009**

Item 6 of the agenda

**Consideration of, with a view to enhancing international  
cooperation, assistance and exchange in biological  
sciences and technology for peaceful purposes, promoting  
capacity building in the fields of disease surveillance,  
detection, diagnosis, and containment of infectious diseases**

**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION UNDER ARTICLE X OF THE  
CONVENTION**

Submitted by Japan on behalf of JACKSNNZ<sup>1</sup>

**I. Introduction**

1. In the 21st century, with threats such as terrorism by non-state actors causing persistent concern, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) plays an increasingly important role in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament. In order to diminish the threat of biological weapons, it is indispensable to not only further promote the universalisation of the Convention, but to also fully implement it.
2. On the theme of this year's intersessional meetings, namely "promoting capacity building in the fields of disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis, and containment of infectious diseases", fruitful discussion on how to promote the implementation of Article X of the Convention and international cooperation for the purpose of strengthening national capacity took place during the Meeting of Experts in August, with the experts that participated providing a wealth of information.
3. Preventing the development of biological weapons and taking sufficient precautionary measures to avert biological threats is highly important. Responding quickly to actual incidents in order to minimise the damage contributes to the enforcement of the Convention. From this aspect, strengthening the capacity of infectious disease surveillance and diagnosis is a crucial element of the BTWC.

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<sup>1</sup> Japan, Australia, Canada, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Norway and New Zealand

4. Member states of JACKSNNZ have not only been bolstering their own domestic surveillance systems, but have been positively engaged in activities to assist developing countries in capacity building for strengthening surveillance, detection, diagnosis and containment of infectious diseases. In this context, the JACKSNNZ believe that international and regional cooperation to strengthen the capabilities and capacity of developing countries is essential.

5. At the same time, the JACKSNNZ recognise that addressing international assistance in a comprehensive manner is important for enhancing the overall effectiveness of the Convention, not limited to the fields of disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis, and containment of infectious diseases.

6. This joint working paper by Japan, submitted on behalf of the JACKSNNZ, aims to highlight some suggestions for prioritizing programs for international cooperation on capacity building in the aforementioned fields.

## **II. Four pillars of international cooperation**

### Tailoring assistance in accordance with ownership (self-reliance) efforts and sustainability

7. Providing effective assistance necessitates that donor countries understand clearly the differing circumstances and needs of the recipient states. For implementing assistance effectively, each state party that seeks support should, in addition to strengthening and developing its existing initiatives, identify priorities in its public health policy and its health care system. In other words, international cooperation under Article X of the Convention is best undertaken with sufficient consideration of the recipient country's domestic implementation, its capacity for receiving assistance and the effectiveness and sustainability of such assistance. In this context, it seems important that each state party that seeks support should submit its comprehensive plans and programs related to public health.

8. Furthermore, the submission of confidence-building measures (CBMs) should also be considered as a way to enhance the effectiveness of international cooperation. Past review conferences encouraged states parties to submit CBMs, and therefore, creating synergies between international cooperation and CBMs may also contribute to effective implementation of capacity building.

### Non-Proliferation

9. International cooperation is one part of the Convention, and this obligation does not exist in isolation. The JACKSNNZ reaffirms disarmament and non-proliferation objectives of the BTWC, and are of the opinion that assistance should not be inconsistent with the provisions contained in Convention, such as those under Article III. This is especially relevant since the intentional misuse of biological agents by non-state actors has become an increasing threat. In order to take preventative measures against this threat, thorough consideration should be given to whether or not the recipient countries have placed pathogens and toxins under proper regulation

and control, including for their import and export, while being mindful of not hindering scientific and technological progress.

10. In this connection, creating synergies between international cooperation and the theme of last year's intersessional meetings, namely, "oversight, education, awareness raising, and adoption and/or development of codes of conduct" is highly appropriate. As such, all stakeholders, including scientists and engineers, should be encouraged and assisted in efforts for oversight, education, awareness raising and adoption and/or development of codes of conduct, given that the beneficiaries of international cooperation are not necessarily limited to the people working in the field of disease surveillance.

11. In this regard, the JACKSNNZ would like to highlight that the collaborative research being conducted by the National Defence Medical College of Japan and Bradford University in the United Kingdom on the development of an education module for life scientists, by which understanding of the dual-use risk of biological agents are deepened through learning the history of biological warfare and terrorism, would greatly add value to the area of education.

Synergies and collaborations with other international organisations and multilateral, bilateral, regional and sub-regional cooperation

12. International organisations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), provide assistance worldwide to improve the health and sanitary conditions of countries. Assistance in accordance with Article X of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention needs, therefore, to be implemented in a manner which avoids the duplication of work and uses resources efficiently. At the same time, states parties should seek to use synergies and collaboration developed in the interactions with and among international organizations so as to strengthen the capabilities and capacity of each country.

13. The same can also be applied to multilateral, bilateral, regional and sub-regional cooperation, in which complementary assistance is expected. The JACKSNNZ recognize that donor states should continue to enhance their own capacity building to cope with their crisis situations, but also through increased cooperation among donor states, assist in developing the capacity of state parties that seek support to achieve universal standards.

Focus of assistance

14. JACKSNNZ members have been providing various types of assistance in the field of disease surveillance. Based on these experiences, the JACKSNNZ share the view that assistance granted under the provisions of Article X of the Convention needs to contribute in particular to the enhancement of bio-safety and bio-security in line with the outcomes of the past intersessional meetings. Assistance in building a laboratory, strengthening human resources and providing education and training on aspects of bio-safety and bio-security are also critical in enhancing the effectiveness of the Convention.

### **III. Conclusion**

15. Promoting capacity building in the fields of disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis, and containment of infectious diseases will contribute to states parties' endeavors to effectively implement the BTWC, and will contribute to further universalisation of the Convention. To this end, each state party that seeks support should first do a needs assessment to establish their priorities. Subsequently, tailoring assistance will be necessary to respond to the needs of each recipient state. Such assistance needs to be carried out in a manner that contributes to the non-proliferation of biological weapons, while keeping in mind the non-proliferation and disarmament objectives of the BTWC. At the same time, international cooperation in the BTWC context should complement the efforts of the relevant international organizations by focusing on the field of bio-safety and bio-security. The JACKSNNZ consider that a more focused approach towards international cooperation will make the Convention more effective for all of its members.

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