

**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**

**STRIVING TOWARDS A COMMON FORMAT FOR REPORTING  
ASSISTANCE OPPORTUNITIES AND NEEDS FROM STATES PARTIES  
IN AREAS WITH RELEVANCE FOR THE BTWC**

Submitted by Sweden on behalf of the European Union

1. Requirements for coordinating assistance opportunities and needs
  - (i) Rapid global scientific and technological development offers new powerful tools to combat human, animal and plant diseases. The mutually reinforcing benefits of efforts under BTWC and those under the International Health Regulations are important. The involvement of an increasing number of States Parties in this development also provides new opportunities for strengthening the BTWC.
  - (ii) The 2009 Meeting of Experts discussed how to “promote capacity building in the fields of disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis, and containment of infectious diseases”. Several working papers from different States Parties presented numerous examples of successful assistance measures and useful experiences on how to promote sustainable capacity building in States Parties in need of assistance. Similarly, several States Parties expressed their specific needs in different areas of capacity building. As a follow up to the Meeting of Experts, and as part of the European Union Joint Action in support of the BTWC, the EU together with the Implementation Support Unit organised a workshop in November this year. States Parties that had expressed specific needs at the Meeting of Experts earlier this year were invited to discuss needs and assistance with EU Member States and the International organisations WHO, OIE and FAO. The workshop provided an opportunity for detailed discussions on how to promote integrated and sustainable

support in capacity building in relation to infectious diseases and bio-safety and bio-security.

- (iii) The need for coordination of assistance from States Parties and international organisations as well as identification of specific needs of individual States Parties were key issues at the 2009 Meeting of Experts. The Review Conference in 2006 and the Chairman of the 2009 Meeting of Experts encouraged States Parties to report on their assistance activities as well as expressing specific needs to the ISU in order to facilitate coordination of efforts and to more easily provide information sharing of experiences and lessons learned.
- (iv) Identification of all activities of assistance from a State Party with relevance for an integrated approach within the area of disease surveillance and disease mitigation provides a significant challenge due to the vast number of initiatives by a wide range of Government departments and agencies, research funding bodies, the private sector and other organisations. One approach could be to collect the information annually in a similar manner as for the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs). There is also some overlap with Form D in the CBMs “Active promotion of contacts”. In order to obtain as comprehensive information as possible it is important to involve all stakeholders, such as international organisations and different funding agencies that support collaboration with developing countries, for instance in the areas of infectious diseases, agriculture and food safety. We are fully aware of the extensive efforts required for collecting and providing this information, but hopefully once routines have been established this task will become less demanding. Importantly, we are convinced that improved coordination is essential for sustainable cooperation aiming at strengthening the BTWC as resources (for cooperation) will always, to some extent, be limited.

## 2. Development of a common format for reporting assistance opportunities and needs

- (i) Assistance can be provided by States Parties and national and international organisations, but only the States Parties requiring assistance can identify their own needs. To make the information regarding assistance opportunities and needs readily available it would be useful to agree on a common format for reporting such information. Ideally this format should also cover other areas of assistance and collaboration between States Parties with direct relevance to the BTWC. It could be of great value to include initiatives in areas like legal implementation, universalisation, collection of information for the CBM submissions and the sharing of best practices.
- (ii) A simple common form for reporting assistance opportunities/needs proposed in the following section could be agreed. We would be happy to engage with interested States Parties and with the ISU to further discuss what should be incorporated. We would also propose that the information should be made available to all States Parties and that the design should be developed to allow computer searches by interested States Parties to find information on cooperation/assistance activities and expressed needs of assistance in areas of relevance for the convention.

### 3. Proposed headings and contents of the reporting form

- (i) Area of assistance opportunity/need
    - (a) Disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis, containment of infectious diseases  
Bio-safety and Bio-security
    - (b) Education on dual-use research risks, code of conduct, ethics
    - (c) Legal implementation
    - (d) Universalisation
    - (e) CBMs
  - (ii) Information regarding assisting/receiving country or organisation
    - (a) Name of country and agency or organisation
    - (b) Information regarding point of contact (POC): name, position, phone number, e-mail address etc.
  - (iii) Form of collaboration/support
    - (a) Workshop, seminar, education, training, infrastructure/equipment, research, guidelines, legal support etc.
  - (iv) Information regarding the project
    - (a) Name, description, (proposed) duration and if possible links to more extensive document(s) regarding the project.
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