

**Eighth Review Conference 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**

19 July 2016

English only

Preparatory Committee  
Geneva, 26-27 April and 8-12 August 2016  
Item 5 of the agenda  
General exchange of views

**Eighth BWC Review Conference: New intersessional work  
programme**

**Submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern  
Ireland**

*Summary*

This paper proposes three interlinked meetings per year to address Science and Technology (S&T), cooperation and assistance and overall operation of the Convention in a more action oriented work programme for 2017-2020; well-defined and constrained authorities for decision making in each of these meetings are outlined as well as arrangements for effective and efficient administration of this process.

**Introduction**

1. A revised and improved work programme is required for the period 2017-2020 to improve capacity for in-depth substantive and technical discussion, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness and implementation of the Convention. The previous model has run its course. A new programme must have discrete and well defined decision making powers delegated to the Annual Meeting of States Parties to enable effective actions to be taken, and common understandings established. Only the Annual Meeting will take any decisions on actions and common understandings. It must be underpinned by an appropriately resourced Implementation Support Unit (ISU). The elements of a Decision for the Eighth Review Conference are proposed in the section below. This elaborates the

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basic concept as outlined in the United Kingdom national statement at the April Preparatory Committee.<sup>1</sup>

## **Proposed text for decisions and recommendations section of the final document**

The States Parties decide to establish a programme of work as follows:

### **Science and technology**

2. A Group of Government Experts on Science and Technology (S&T) will meet in the spring each year for one week to review and assess S&T developments and how they may impact on the operation of the Convention; and to identify and submit appropriate proposals to enhance the effective implementation of the Convention, where agreed by consensus, to the Annual Meeting of States Parties.

3. The Group will respond to tasking from the Annual Meeting of States Parties when advice or assessments are required on any specific topic with particular reference to its benefits and risks to the object and purpose of the Convention. The Group will set its own agenda covering the technical topics to be addressed and invite relevant subject matter experts from academia, industry and other research organisations to support its work through inter alia participation at, and contributions to, its meetings. The Group will submit technical reports on its meetings and, as appropriate, on relevant topics of its own choosing to help inform the Annual Meeting of States Parties, in a comprehensive and balanced manner, about the issues discussed as well as any immediate or potential implications for the implementation of the Convention. Such reports are to provide a more robust and comprehensive technical basis to inform the deliberations and possible recommendations of the other two meetings held in the intersessional programme as elaborated below.

4. In order to enable the States Parties to send experts with the appropriate scientific and technical knowledge, expertise and experience, the first tasks and topics to be addressed by the group will include [...].<sup>2</sup>

5. Decisions on any actions that might be proposed or required in light of Group reports will remain the sole responsibility for the States Parties. The Group will be chaired by a scientific expert nominated and agreed by the States Parties; the Chair will preferably serve for the term of the next intersessional programme. The Group will be supported by a scientific officer to be recruited and based in the Implementation Support Unit. The ISU will establish an electronic experts' communication system to enable exchanges of views and information in between its formal meetings on topics under consideration or relevant to the Group's mandate.

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<sup>1</sup>.  
[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/FAA8FE427C7F6587C1257FA400473590/\\$file/BWC\\_PC\\_8RC\\_UK.pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/FAA8FE427C7F6587C1257FA400473590/$file/BWC_PC_8RC_UK.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> To be determined by the Review Conference. The text on an S&T review process was contained in BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.4 - A future science and technology review process - Submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

## Cooperation and assistance

6. A Working Group on Cooperation and Assistance composed of States Parties and other experts including from relevant international and non-governmental organisations will meet in the summer for one week each year to address how best the Convention may contribute to national, regional and international efforts to combat infectious disease and specifically the roles that Articles VII and X should play in such a process, with particular focus on infectious disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis and mitigation capability and capacity building, especially in less economically developed countries. In particular, it should develop and agree a format for requesting assistance under Article VII, develop and design an assistance database in the framework of Article VII and address ways of further developing and maximising the use of the current assistance and cooperation database. The Group will develop recommendations for action if agreed by consensus for consideration and adoption by the annual meeting of States Parties. The Group will appoint its own Chair who will preferably serve for the term of the next intersessional programme. The Chair will produce a report in two parts: the first will be a summary of the discussions in his/her own capacity; the second will contain any recommendations or actions agreed by the States Parties.

## Annual Meeting of States Parties: functions and issues

7. An annual meeting of States Parties will convene for up to two weeks each year in the autumn to review and decide as required any recommendations or conclusions arising from Group of Government Experts on Science and Technology and the Working Group on Cooperation and Assistance. The Chair and vice chairs of the annual autumn meeting will rotate between the regional groups, starting with a representative of the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States (NAM) in 2017. This meeting will also address and decide on any actions agreed as required on:

- (a) Efforts to achieve universality;
- (b) Reports and actions on measures taken by the States Parties singly or collectively to ensure, promote and strengthen effective national implementation under Articles III and IV;
- (c) Measures to address the threat from non-state actors;
- (d) Measures to provide effective frameworks for effective oversight, guidance and training in the life sciences;
- (e) Enhancing transparency;
- (f) Reassurance of compliance with the Convention;
- (g) The operation of the existing and potentially further enhanced confidence building and transparency measures, and
- (h) The annual ISU report.

8. Time on each topic will be allocated on an as required basis. Friends of the Chair may be tasked by the annual Chair to progress the work and to report on any results and the work done on each topic. Such reports are to be a factual account of the work done. The annual Chair will produce a report in two parts: the first will be a summary of the discussions in his/her own capacity; the second will contain any recommendations or actions agreed by the States Parties. The 2017-2020 intersessional programme may be revised or updated by the annual meeting of States Parties in light of experience and only where there is consensus to do so.

### **Effective and efficient organisational and administrative aspects**

9. The Chair and two vice chairs of the annual meeting of States Parties, Chairs of the Group of Government Experts on Science and Technology and the Working Group on Cooperation and Assistance, the regional coordinators, any Friends of the Chair appointed by the Chair, the depositary powers and the Head of the ISU will meet as required during each year to facilitate the effective and efficient organisation and administration of the overall programme. The Chair of the annual meeting will also chair any meetings of this group.

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