

**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**

11 August 2016

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**Preparatory Committee**

**Geneva, 26-27 April and 8-12 August 2016**

Item 7 of the agenda

**Comprehensive consideration of all provisions of the Convention**

**Implementation of National CBRN action plans:  
Facilitating cooperation to strengthen capacities against bio-  
risks**

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**Introduction**

1. In recent years, events related to Ebola virus disease and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) reminded humanity of the global threat posed by disease outbreaks – whether natural, accidental or criminal in origin. Likewise, the potential misuse of biological agents and biotechnology by criminals or terrorists could lead to intentional harm to human, animal and/or environmental health. These risks accentuate the need for robust biosafety and biosecurity measures as well as innovative, coordinated mechanisms for enhancing national implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and relevant cooperation and exchange. Indeed, it is becoming increasingly evident that biological risks can be effectively managed only through collaboration and coordination of existing resources located among different agencies and organizations both at the national and international levels.

**National action plans: practical tools for building capacities**

2. An effective strategy to mitigate chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) risks of criminal, accidental or natural origin requires a very high level of cooperation and coordination both between different national agencies and among States and International and Regional Organizations. With a view to strengthening national capabilities to counteract such risks, the European Union CBRN Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence initiative, funded by the European Commission and implemented by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, was launched in 2010.

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3. The initiative is putting in place a framework providing for cooperation and coordination between all levels of government and international partners such as the BWC Implementation Support Unit (ISU), as well as the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the UN Security Council Resolution 1540 Committee, and the World Health Organization through the International Health Regulations, *inter alia*. The initiative also facilitates regional cooperation in order to enhance CBRN capabilities, as well as promoting the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 and subsequent relevant resolutions.

4. As a direct result and an outcome of the above initiative the partner States have elaborated or are in the process of developing National Action Plans for CBRN risk mitigation. These plans are already available in certain States: Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Kenya, Montenegro, Philippines and Uganda, among others.

5. The National Action Plan is a unique document that sets out the national risk landscape and identifies capacity gaps and priority actions for building capabilities. Outlining a consolidated and coherent set of priorities and activities, the National Action Plan identifies measures that can be implemented with the State's own resources and aims to ensure that international assistance programs are in line with States' needs and expectations. The National Action Plan facilitates the reinforcing of a State's capabilities to prevent, detect, prepare for and respond to a wide spectrum of risks such as terrorism, accidents, and natural disease outbreaks affecting the population at large.

### **A coordinated approach to mitigating bio-risks**

6. A key advantage of the National Action Plans is found in the coordination of capacity-building activities to more effectively counter biological and CBRN risks. This implies greater synchronisation within individual States as well as between States and relevant international organizations.

7. At the national level, the National Action Plan is drafted by an inter-agency team composed of a cross-section of all levels of government, relevant stakeholders and experts. This inclusive process ensures that the Action Plan reflects a State's key capacity needs and core priorities.

8. With regard to international coordination, the National Action Plans are produced in cooperation with and taking into account the work of relevant international partners, and promote the coordination of international assistance by providing a consolidated source of information that is useful for streamlining the efforts of various external donors and partners.

### **A proposed action on how to utilize the NAP in BWC context**

9. Capacity-building activities based on the National CBRN Action Plans can make a substantial contribution to bolstering national measures to implement the Biological Weapons Convention, in line with Article IV of the Convention and the importance attributed to national implementation measures in recent BWC Meeting of States Parties reports.

10. The National Action Plans serve as useful instruments for ensuring that cooperation and assistance – in the context of Article X of the Convention – is performed efficiently, without duplication of efforts and focusing on States own capacity needs and priorities. Particularly when the priorities identified in States' Action Plans are matched with existing international donor capacities and assistance offers (e.g. the BWC assistance database), the

implementation of the National Action Plans can have a remarkable impact in augmenting States' capacities in the area of biological risk mitigation.

11. It is therefore in the benefit of the BWC States Parties to support the implementation of the National Action Plans as an important component in future strategy for implementing and strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention.

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