

Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

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English only

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Agenda item 6

Identifying, examining and developing specific and effective measures, including possible legally-binding measures, and making recommendations to strengthen and institutionalize the Convention in all its aspects within the mandate of the Working Group

Establishment of a Cooperation Committee to facilitate and support the full implementation of international cooperation and assistance under Article X

Submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran

1. The Biological Weapons Convention lacks an effective institutional mechanism under Article X to facilitate and support the full, effective and non-discriminatory exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the use of biological and toxin agents for peaceful purposes. To address this shortcoming, the Non-Aligned Movement proposed the establishment of a “Cooperation Committee” in 1999¹.
2. The Ninth Review Conference decided to develop with a view to establishing a mechanism open to all States Parties to facilitate and support the full implementation of international cooperation and assistance under Article X and in order for this mechanism to be established, mandated the Working Group on the strengthening of the Convention to make appropriate recommendations.
3. The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that establishment of a “Cooperation Committee” (hereinafter referred to as the committee) is essential for facilitating and supporting the full implementation of international cooperation and assistance under Article X. On this basis and as a contribution to consideration and discussion of the issue in the Working Group, the committee should be established based on the following fundamental elements:

A. Objective

- The objective of the committee is aimed at facilitating and supporting the effective, full and non-discriminatory implementation of international cooperation and assistance under Article X of the Convention.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 9 August 2023.

¹ BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.349



B. Functions

- The committee should perform the following functions:
 - (a) To consult on, monitor, review, recommend and decide on activities to facilitate and support international cooperation and assistance and the fullest possible exchanges of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the use of microbial and other biological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes;
 - (b) To facilitate and promote non-discriminatory access of all States Parties to, and transfer of, technology, equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the use of biological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes;
 - (c) To identify challenges and obstacles to international cooperation as well as the needs of States Parties for assistance and cooperation; and to put forward practical recommendations on ways and means of addressing such challenges and removing of such obstacles;
 - (d) To consider denials of transfer of equipment, materials, and technology for peaceful purposes, and to provide a factual report as well as recommendations aimed at preventing such denials;
 - (e) To facilitate non-discriminatory bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation programs, on a mutually advantageous, equal and non-discriminatory basis;
 - (f) To facilitate and support capacity-building measures through international cooperation in developing capabilities for detecting, reporting, and responding to the outbreaks of infectious disease or biological weapons attacks, including in the areas of emergency preparedness, response, management, and mitigation;
 - (g) To facilitate and support the provision of training, technical advice, equipment and materials to improve capabilities of laboratories on the prevention, surveillance, detection and diagnosis of diseases;
 - (h) To conduct matchmaking between offers of, and requests for, cooperation and assistance, among States Parties to foster complementarity and synergies of cooperation initiatives, and to monitor and review the operation of Article X Database, and make recommendations aimed at promoting the functionality and effectiveness of the Database for assistance and cooperation;
 - (i) To promote and coordinate cooperation with other relevant international and regional organizations for the financial and technological support of activities for peaceful purposes;
 - (j) To manage, in an equitable basis, financial resources allocated by States Parties to the cooperation activities including reviewing the performance of any possible voluntary fund – to be established to finance the activities aimed at promoting of cooperation among States Parties.

C. Composition

- Participation in the committee is open to all States Parties that nominate a representative, who may be accompanied by alternate(s) and/or adviser(s).

D. Rules of Procedure

- The BWC Review Conference's Rules of Procedure shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the proceedings of the committee.

E. Chairmanship

- The committee shall elect one of its members as its chair for the duration of one year, rotating between regional groups.

F. Meetings

- The committee will meet at least twice a year for a duration of one week each, one session should be held immediately prior to the Meeting of States Parties. Additional meetings may be convened in accordance with the committee's rules of procedure.
- The Chair of the committee shall inform, through the ISU, its members in advance about the time and place of the meetings.
- Relevant international organizations could be invited to attend the committee meetings.

G. Decisions and Recommendations

- All substantive recommendations and decisions of the committee will be adopted by consensus.

H. Review of the Mandate

- The mandate of the committee could be reviewed by the Review Conference.

I. Reporting

- The committee will submit an annual report to the MSPs for its consideration. It also will submit a final report to the Review Conference for its consideration.
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