

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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Third Session

Geneva, 4-8 December 2023

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

Procedural report of the third session of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention¹

I. Opening of the third session of the Working Group

1. In accordance with the decisions of the Ninth Review Conference, the third session of the Working Group was convened at the Palais des Nations in Geneva from 4 to 8 December 2023. The Working Group held ten meetings during that period under the Chairpersonship of Ambassador Flavio Soares Damico, Special Representative of Brazil to the Conference on Disarmament. Ambassador Camille Petit, Permanent Representative of France to the Conference on Disarmament, and Mr. Irakli Jgenti, Deputy Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations Office in Geneva, served as its Vice-Chairpersons.

2. Mr. Daniel Feakes, Chief, Implementation Support Unit, Office for Disarmament Affairs, Geneva, served as Secretary of the Meeting. Mr. Hermann Lampalzer, Political Affairs Officer, Implementation Support Unit, served as Deputy Secretary. Ms. Clarissa Rios Rojas, Political Affairs Officer, and Mr. Oscar Meless, Political Affairs Officer, served in the Secretariat.

II. Participation at the third session of the Working Group

3. The following 117 delegations participated in the third session of the Working Group: Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Libya, Lithuania, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda,

¹ Any entry listed in this document does not imply the expression of any opinion regarding, and is without prejudice to, the legal status of any country or territory or of its authorities.



Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zambia, Zimbabwe.

4. In addition, two States that had signed the Convention but had not yet ratified it participated in the third session of the Working Group without taking part in the making of decisions, as provided for in rule 44, paragraph 1 of the rules of procedure: Arab Republic of Egypt, Syrian Arab Republic.

5. One State, Israel, neither party nor signatory to the Convention, participated in the third session of the Working Group as an observer, in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 2.

6. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs attended the third session of the Working Group in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 3.

7. The Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization, the European Union, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Organization of American States and the World Health Organization were granted observer status to participate in the third session of the Working Group in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 4.

8. In addition, at the invitation of the Chairperson, in recognition of the special nature of the issues under consideration at this session and without creating a precedent, experts from international organizations and non-governmental organizations participated as guests in panel sessions organized by the Chairperson as reflected in paragraphs 13 and 14.

9. Twenty-eight non-governmental organizations and research institutes attended the third session of the Working Group under rule 44, paragraph 5.

10. A list of all participants in the third session of the Working Group is contained in document BWC/WG/3/INF.1.

III. 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

11. In accordance with the indicative schedule of activities as adopted at its first session (see Annex II of BWC/WG/1/2), the Working Group continued its consideration of agenda item 6 on “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”.

12. At the third session of the Working Group, the Chairperson was assisted in his consultations and negotiations by the following Friends of the Chair on the particular issues allocated by the first session of the Working Group:

- Confidence-building and transparency – Mr. Angel Horna (Peru), Mr. Laurent Masmejean (Switzerland);
- Compliance and verification – H.E. Mr. Robert in den Bosch (Kingdom of the Netherlands), Mr. Alonso Francisco Martínez Ruiz (Mexico); and
- Organizational, institutional and financial arrangements – Mr. Husham Ahmed (Pakistan), H.E. Mr. Ichiro Ogasawara/Mr. Shigeru Umetsu (Japan) and Mr. Arsen Omarov (Kazakhstan).

13. The Working Group held two meetings on 4 December 2023 devoted to the issue of “Measures on confidence-building and transparency”. The following States Parties introduced working papers on this issue: the Russian Federation (BWC/WG/3/WP.4) and Uganda (BWC/WG/3/WP.7). In panel sessions on this issue organized by the Chairperson, technical

briefings were provided by Mr. Daniel Feakes representing the BWC Implementation Support Unit and Dr. James Revill representing the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. There then followed an interactive discussion in which the following States Parties participated: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Botswana, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, China, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Mali, Mexico, Nigeria (on behalf of the African Group of States Parties to the BWC), Pakistan, Panama, Russian Federation, Singapore, South Africa, Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

14. The Working Group held six meetings from 5 to 7 December 2023 devoted to the issue of "Measures on compliance and verification". The following States Parties introduced working papers on this issue: China (BWC/WG/3/WP.10), Denmark and Panama (on behalf of Denmark, Kenya Malawi, Montenegro, Norway, Panama, Singapore, Thailand and Uruguay) (BWC/WG/3/WP.8 and Rev.1), Iran (Islamic Republic of) (BWC/WG/3/WP.11), Panama (BWC/WG/3/WP.14), Russian Federation (BWC/WG/3/WP.3, BWC/WG/3/WP.5 and BWC/WG/3/WP.13), Ukraine (BWC/WG/3/WP.15), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (BWC/WG/3/WP.6), United States of America (BWC/WG/3/WP.9 and BWC/WG/3/WP.12). In panel sessions on this issue organized by the Chairperson, technical briefings were provided by Dr. James Revill representing the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Mr. Daniel Feakes representing the BWC Implementation Support Unit, Dr. Anastasia Malygina representing St. Petersburg State University, Dr. Ali Mohammadi representing Global Health and Security Consultants, Dr. Jeremy Littlewood (independent researcher), Mr. Ionut Suseanu representing the International Atomic Energy Agency, Ms. Carolyn Browne representing the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Mr. Joseph Ballard representing the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization, Ms. Christine Uhlenhaut representing the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Li Lijuan representing the Ministry of National Defense of China, Mr. Ryan Teo representing the University of Birmingham and Dr. Esther Hamblion representing the World Health Organization. There then followed an interactive discussion in which the following States Parties participated: Algeria, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Cuba, Czechia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, France, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Nigeria (on behalf of the African Group of States Parties to the BWC), Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Russian Federation, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

15. The Working Group held two meetings on 8 December 2023 devoted to the issue of "Measures on organizational, institutional and financial arrangements". The following State Party introduced working papers on this issue: Kazakhstan (BWC/WG/3/WP.1 and BWC/WG/3/WP.2). The Implementation Support Unit provided a technical presentation. There then followed an interactive discussion in which the following States Parties participated: Algeria, Australia, Austria, Canada, China, Cuba, Czechia, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Italy, Kazakhstan, Libya, Panama, Peru, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Togo, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

IV. Documentation

16. A list of official documents of the third session of the Working Group is contained in Annex I to this report. All documents on this list are available on the BWC website at <https://meetings.unoda.org/bwc-/biological-weapons-convention-working-group-on-the-strengthening-of-the-convention-third-session-2023> and through the United Nations Official Document System (ODS), at <http://documents.un.org>.

V. Conclusion of the Meeting

17. At its closing meeting on 8 December 2023, the third session of the Working Group adopted its procedural report by consensus, as contained in documents BWC/WG/3/CRP.1 and Rev.1, as orally amended, to be issued as document BWC/WG/3/1.

Annex I

List of documents of the third session of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
BWC/WG/3/1	Procedural report of the third session of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention
BWC/WG/3/CRP.1 English only	Draft procedural report of the third session of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention
BWC/WG/3/CRP.1/Rev.1 English only	Revised draft procedural report of the third session of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention
BWC/WG/3/Misc.1 English/French/Spanish only	Provisional list of participants of the third session of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention
BWC/WG/3/INF.1 English/French/Spanish only	List of participants of the third session of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention
BWC/WG/3/WP.1 English only	Updated concept paper on the International Agency for Biological Safety – Submitted by Kazakhstan
BWC/WG/3/WP.2 English only	Possible elements of a Draft Statute of the International Agency for Biological Safety – Submitted by Kazakhstan
BWC/WG/3/WP.3 English and Russian only	Military biological activities of the United States and Ukraine on the Ukrainian territory in violation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction – Submitted by the Russian Federation
BWC/WG/3/WP.4 English and Russian only	Proposal to enhance the format of confidence-building measures under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction – Submitted by the Russian Federation
BWC/WG/3/WP.5 English and Russian only	Conceptual and methodological aspects of a possible mechanism of verification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction – Submitted by the Russian Federation
BWC/WG/3/WP.6 English only	Building global biosecurity via confidence in compliance with the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention – Submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
BWC/WG/3/WP.7 English only	Enhancing the Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) Regime through the Integration of Global Health Security Metrics – Submitted by Uganda
BWC/WG/3/WP.8 English only	Key considerations when relaunching the discussion on verification and compliance in the context of the Biological Weapons Convention – Submitted by Denmark, Malawi, Montenegro, Norway, Panama, Singapore and Uruguay
BWC/WG/3/WP.8/Rev.1 English only	Key considerations when relaunching the discussion on verification and compliance in the context of the Biological Weapons Convention

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
	– Submitted by Denmark, Kenya, Malawi, Montenegro, Norway, Panama, Singapore, Thailand and Uruguay
BWC/WG/3/WP.9 English only	U.S. Approach to the Working Group on the Strengthening of the BWC – Submitted by the United States of America
BWC/WG/3/WP.10 Chinese and English only	Verification Mechanism of the Biological Weapons Convention under New Circumstances – Submitted by China
BWC/WG/3/WP.11 English only	Strengthening Compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention through a Legally Binding Instrument – Submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran
BWC/WG/3/WP.12 English only	United States Right of Reply to the Russian Federation – Submitted by the United States of America
BWC/WG/3/WP.13 English only	Contemporary problems of verification under the BTWC. Historic work experience of the VEREX and the Ad Hoc Group of States Parties to the BTWC – Submitted by the Russian Federation
BWC/WG/3/WP.14 English only	Enhancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment as an Integral Part of the Institutional Strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) – Submitted by Panama
BWC/WG/3/WP.15 English only	Comments of the Ukrainian Side with regard to the Working Paper BWC/WG/3/WP.3 submitted by the Russian Federation – Submitted by Ukraine
BWC/WG/3/WP.16 English only	Position of the European Union on Transparency and Confidence-Building Within the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention – Submitted by the European Union
BWC/WG/3/WP.17 English only	Position of the European Union on Compliance with and Verification Under the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention – Submitted by the European Union
BWC/WG/3/WP.18 English only	Position of the European Union on Organizational, Institutional and Financial Arrangements Within the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention – Submitted by the European Union
