
Meeting 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

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Issues of substance and process for the period before the next Review Conference, with a view to reaching consensus on an intersessional process

Need to establish a BWC Science and Technology Review Process

Submitted by Switzerland

I. Background

1. Developments in science and technology (S&T) in the life sciences play a pivotal role in the effectiveness and continued relevance of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). S&T developments underpin all operational articles and aspects of the Convention, and ensuring that the BWC keeps pace with these developments will be essential to meet many of the challenges that it faces. Special attention is required to monitor these advances in order to identify new opportunities for furthering the Convention's aims and objectives, and to ensure that the life sciences and biotechnology are not used for purposes contrary to its provisions.
2. Taking into account the deliberations among States Parties in recent years, especially in the run-up to and during the Eighth BWC Review Conference in November 2016, there seems to be broad agreement that the establishment of a dedicated science and technology review process in the framework of the BWC is an indispensable element to strengthen the Convention and further its aims and objectives.

II. A broad basis to build upon

3. Many valuable ideas in numerous statements and working papers on the importance, design and features of a BWC science and technology review process have been submitted by States Parties and provide a useful basis for further discussions on how to take this matter forward.
4. This includes, but is not limited to, BWC/CONF.VII/WP.3 - *Proposal for structured and systematic review of science and technology developments under the Convention* - Submitted by India; BWC/CONF.VII/WP.13 - *Proposal for the annual review of advances in science and technology relevant to the Biological Weapons Convention* - Submitted by Australia, Japan and New Zealand; BWC/MSP/2013/WP.5 - *Establishing a dedicated structure for the review of developments in biological science and technology* - Submitted by Switzerland; BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.11 - *Reviewing developments in science and technology: Parameters and considerations for a dedicated process* - Submitted by



Switzerland; BWC/MSP/2015/WP.10 - *Reviewing developments in science and technology: Examples of dedicated processes* - Submitted by Switzerland; BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.2/Rev.2 - *Strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention Proposal for the establishment of a Scientific Advisory Committee* - Submitted by the Russian Federation; BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.3 - *Science and technology review for the BWC: Features of an effective process* - Submitted by the United States of America; BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.4 - *A future science and technology review process* - Submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.7 - *Elements on science and technology for the 2016 Review Conference - the importance of an active review process* - Submitted by Finland, Norway and Sweden; BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.8 - *Strengthening the BWC science and technology review process* - Submitted by the Switzerland; BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.16 - *Strengthening the BWC science and technology review process: Considerations regarding the composition of an S&T review body* - Submitted by Switzerland; BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.27 - *Reviewing Science and Technology within the BWC: Elements for a politically independent process* - Submitted by Spain; BWC/CONF.VIII/WP.12 - *The BTWC Review Process of Science and Technology* - Submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran; as well as BWC/CONF.VIII/WP.17 - *Review of Developments in Science and Technology: Key Points from the 2012-2015 BTWC Intersessional Programme* - Submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In addition, the informal *President's Proposal* submitted by the President of the Eighth Review Conference on 23 November 2016 (BWC/CONF.VIII/CRP.3) foresaw the establishment of a dedicated S&T working group.

5. The high number of working papers and interventions underlines the importance that States Parties attach to taking the issue forward. The various proposals made have many elements in common and show a significant degree of convergence on a number of key issues regarding how a dedicated science and technology review process could be structured.

III. Recommendations

6. The 2017 BWC Meeting of States Parties has been mandated, inter alia, to make progress on issues of substance and process for the period before the next Review Conference, with a view to reaching consensus on an intersessional process. Switzerland is of the view that the establishment of a dedicated expert-driven S&T review process should constitute a core element of any future intersessional programme.

7. Such a review process would contribute to strengthening the implementation of all substantial articles of the Convention and therefore represents an issue around which all States Parties should be able to rally. Switzerland suggests building upon the groundwork that has been laid with regard to the design and features of a future BWC science and technology review process in a flexible manner in order to allow States Parties to work towards an agreement on the establishment of such a process that is both acceptable and beneficial to all States Parties.
