

**Formal Consultative 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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**2022 Meeting**

Geneva, 26 August and 5-9 September 2022

Item 6 of the agenda

**Respective outstanding questions by the Russian Federation  
to the United States and to Ukraine concerning the fulfilment  
of their respective obligations under the Convention in the context  
of the operation of biological laboratories in Ukraine**

**Questions of the Russian Federation to the United  
States and Ukraine regarding the compliance with  
their obligations under the Convention on the  
Prohibition of the Development, Production and  
Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin  
Weapons and on Their Destruction (BTWC) in the  
context of the activities of biological laboratories in  
the territory of Ukraine**

**Submitted by the Russian Federation**

**I. Questions to Ukraine regarding compliance with obligations  
under Part 1 of Article I of the BTWC**

1. What activities with pathogenic biomaterials were carried out at the I.Mechnikov Anti-Plague Institute in Odessa in the period from 2017 to 2018, if, according to the report of the commission of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, there were over two thousand storage units of pathogenic biomaterials at that time, while in 2018 only one research work was officially conducted involving the tularemia strains in the collection of the Institute, and no report on the use of the collection for 2017 was submitted?
2. Why, as of December 28, 2018, there was no documented information at the I.Mechnikov Anti-Plague Institute in Odessa regarding the actual status of strains, and there was not an evidence base regarding the need to maintain a large number of pathogen test tubes with the same strains of different passages presented to the committee?
3. What is the reason for the choice of pathogens studied in Ukraine as part of the Threat Reduction Program? Why in a number of cases the nomenclature of studied pathogens is not related to relevant public health problems and can hardly be explained by preventive or protective purposes (for example the TAP-6 project to study the causative agent of glanders, cases of which have never been recorded by veterinary and sanitary and epidemiological services of Ukraine)? Why, under the conditions of the gravest state of sanitary and epidemiological well-being system, threatened by the spread of infections defeated in most countries of WHO European region and an unsatisfactory level of



population immunization, in Ukraine the attention was not paid to actual health problems, but to anthrax, highly pathogenic influenza and other especially dangerous pathogens?

4. How should the accumulation of especially dangerous infection strains and their transfer to other countries help to improve the infectious disease situation?

5. Why is it necessary to store 422 containers with cholera bacteria at the I.Mechnikov Antiplague Institute in Odessa, if the genetic diversity of cholera-causing vibrios is limited to only two serogroups?

6. Why was emphasis placed on the study of naturally occurring and especially dangerous infections, which, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lists, are considered to be potential pathogens for biological weapons?

7. Why is the study of pathogens of especially dangerous infections, including those that overcome the protective effect of vaccines and possessing the ability to control them, instead of improving the system of epidemiological surveillance, developing anti-epidemic action plans, conducting public health education, establishing the supply of vaccines and expanding immunization, the collection of information on the infection rate, biological samples of humans and their export, the export of national collections containing pathogenic microorganisms, considered to be a priority?

## **II. Questions to Ukraine regarding compliance with obligations under Part 2 of Article I of the BTWC**

8. What kind of life- and health-threatening research is referred to in the UP-8 project (Circulation of Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever virus and hantaviruses in Ukraine and the potential need for differential diagnosis of patients with suspected leptospirosis)?

9. What was the reason for the involvement of specialized U.S. military professionals in the research within the framework of the UP-2 project (Mapping of Especially Dangerous Infectious Diseases in Ukraine)? What tasks were solved by them in the course of the project? Considering that the epidemiological situation with anthrax in Ukraine remains favorable, why was the conducted research necessary and what are its true objectives?

10. What tasks were solved by the specialists of research organizations of the Ministry of Defense of the USA (researches were carried out by the specialists of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, the Naval Medical Research Institute) within the framework of fulfilled projects UP-1 (Implementation of geoinformation systems, remote detection and laboratory diagnostics while monitoring tularemia and anthrax in sanitary-epidemiological and veterinary practice in Ukraine) and UP-2? What justifies the necessity of their involvement as participants in research aimed at solving, as declared, "purely peaceful" tasks?

11. What is the reason for the interest of the Ukrainian company "Motor Sich" in the supply of an unmanned aerial vehicle "Bayraktar Akinji" (request of December 15, 2021)? How does this request correlate with Ukraine's obligations under Part 2 of Article I of the BTWC?

## **III. Questions for Ukraine regarding compliance with its obligations under Article IV of the BTWC**

12. For what reasons was the proper level of biological protection in organizations and institutions working with pathogens in Ukraine not ensured, and why is there a lack of national legislation regarding the control of particularly dangerous pathogens?

13. Why was the Ukrainian side not taking into account the recommendations of the Ukrainian security service in the context of ensuring the safety of Ukrainian bio-objects?

14. Why, despite the revealed gross violations of biological safety requirements and prerequisites for theft of pathogenic materials, were the activities of Ukrainian biolaboratories continued in the normal mode?

#### **IV. Questions for the United States regarding the compliance with its obligations under Article IV of the BTWC**

15. Is it an established practice for the U.S. Patent and Trademark Agency to grant, after peer review, patents for inventions directly related to the delivery and use of biological and toxin weapons?

16. How does the granting of patents on inventions, the technical description of which implies their use as a means of delivery of biological and toxin weapons, relate to the U.S. obligations under Article IV of the BTWC?

17. Does the United States consider the inventions featured in these patents to be tools that could be used to deliver biological and toxin weapons?

18. What explains the necessity of the centralization of collections and transfer to the U.S. of the strains of dangerous pathogens isolated in the territory of Ukraine, as stipulated by Article IV of the 2005 Agreement "On cooperation in the field of prevention of the spread of pathogens, technologies and knowledge that may be used in the development of biological weapons" (Agreement)?

19. What is the reason for giving the results of works, obtained within the framework of the implementation of the Threat Reduction Program in Ukraine, a limited and closed nature? How does this requirement under the Agreement contribute to transparency and confidence-building within the BTWC?

20. How was the U.S. assistance, as implemented, intended to ensure a sanitary and epidemiological well-being of the population of Ukraine? What are the objectives and goals of the U.S. assistance in the area of ensuring a sanitary and epidemiological well-being of the population of Ukraine? What are the key indicators of its effectiveness?

21. What public health indicators have improved over the past 10-15 years due to the U.S. assistance in Ukraine? Has the sanitary and epidemiological situation in Ukraine improved as a result of the interaction with the United States: has the incidence of infectious diseases decreased, has the immunization coverage increased, has testing for infections become more accessible, are there more specialists (epidemiologists, microbiologists, sanitary doctors), have there been new developments of tests and vaccines, has the recording of infectious diseases improved?

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**Ninth 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**

29 November 2022

English only

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Geneva, 28 November to 16 December 2022

Item 11 of the agenda

Consideration of issues identified in the review of the operation of the Convention  
as provided for in its Article XII and any possible consensus follow-up action

**Approach to Strengthening Measures for Emerging  
Infectious Diseases based on Lessons Learned from the Ebola  
Outbreak**

Submitted by Japan

**I. Introduction**

**I. Introduction**

1. The 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa made it clear that the international community should enhance capacity not only to provide humanitarian assistance, but also to rapidly respond to infectious diseases to cope with the threat to the safety of the international community. Hence, at the 8th Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in 2016, States Parties acknowledged the importance of drawing lessons from the outbreak, including the need to address the lack of ready operational capacity, and stressed the value of strengthening international cooperation in infectious disease prevention and associated capacity building.

2. Under these circumstances, Japan identified lessons learned from the outbreak and in 2015 compiled “the Basic Guideline for Strengthening Measures on Emerging Infectious Diseases.” Various measures under the guideline have been effectively implemented through integrated efforts by related ministries and agencies.

3. This working paper summarizes lessons learned from the Ebola outbreak that began in 2014 and identifies measures to tackle each lesson. In addition, the paper introduces the “Japan Disaster Relief Infectious Diseases Response Team (JDR- Infectious Diseases Response Team),” which was established after the Ebola outbreak in 2014. The UK also acknowledged, as one of the key lessons, the need for rapid response units and introduced their team at the Meeting of Experts in 2018. Japan agrees that such teams implementing international assistance are important tools to respond against emerging infectious diseases. For States Parties which have such teams or are considering to establish them, the paper includes lessons and recommendations drawn from past experiences of the JDR-Infectious Diseases Response Team.



## **II. Lessons from the Ebola Outbreak in 2014 and Japan's International Cooperation**

### **A. The need for international cooperation that promotes the strengthening of vulnerable health systems in affected countries**

4. In the Ebola in 2014 affected countries, there was delayed action from basic health and medical services. In addition, existing vulnerable health services failed to function properly, therefore, it became difficult to address not only infectious diseases but also other diseases. Given this situation, at a country level, it is important to support building a resilient health system from the medium to long-term perspective and to strengthen the prevention of infectious diseases through collaboration with international organizations. Specifically, cooperation is necessary while designing health systems and educating health workers at the country, region, and community levels.

5. To address these needs, Japan has taken the following measures:

- Strengthen health systems and promote Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in Africa and Asia by synergistically combining grant aid, government loans, and technical cooperation.
- Build capacities for diagnosis, surveillance and quarantine to implement WHO's International Health Regulations (IHR) in developing countries through capacity building and networking of research institutions and hub organizations.
- Promote assistance for strengthening health systems in developing countries through cooperation with The Global Fund, other international organizations and donors.

### **B. Need of strengthening cooperation with related international organizations to enhance capacity in response to infectious diseases**

6. Countries could not sufficiently coordinate with international organizations and NGOs, thus allowing the spread of the Ebola virus. Coordination makes a significant difference in slowing the epidemic. In addition, the capacity of international organizations and NGOs should be enhanced to provide effective and efficient action in the event of a future outbreak of the infectious diseases.

7. To address this need, Japan has taken the following measures:

- Promote a new framework of global health governance through discussions at international conferences to enhance coordination among assisting stakeholders.
- Provide support for international initiatives, such as the Global Health Innovative Technology Fund (GHIT), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.
- Support regional seminars to enhance coordination with stakeholders in case of the use of biological weapons.

### **C. The need for a rapid international response against the outbreak of infectious diseases**

8. The key lesson from the Ebola outbreak in 2014 is that a rapid international response is necessary to slow the speed of the outbreak. The construction of an international response framework that enables the international community to immediately address public health emergencies is essential to contain infectious diseases in the early stages.

9. Japan has taken the following measures to address this need:

- Provide financial support to the Contingency Fund for Emergencies (CFE) of WHO and the Pandemic Emergency Facility (PEF) of the World Bank;

- Established the “Japan Disaster Relief Infectious Diseases Response Team (JDR-Infectious Diseases Response Team).”

### **III. Japan Disaster Relief Infectious Diseases Response Team (JDR-Infectious Diseases Response Team)**

#### **A. Outline of JDR-Infectious Diseases Response Team**

10. Based on Law concerning Dispatch of the Japan Disaster Relief Team (JDR Law) entered into force on 1987, the Government of Japan dispatches Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) teams in response to requests from the governments of affected countries or international agencies based on the decision of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Since 1987 and up until June 2019, 151 JDR teams have been dispatched. JDR consists of five types of teams, search and rescue, medical, expert, infectious disease response and Self-defense force unit. Self-defense force unit can be dispatched, if Minister for Foreign Affairs finds it particularly necessary.

11. The Infectious Disease Response Team (JDR-Infectious Diseases Response Team), established in October 2015, is dispatched under JDR Law to support affected country’s response effort and to minimize the spread of the naturally caused disease. The five specialist functions consist of epidemiology, laboratory diagnosis, medical treatment, infection control, public health response. In addition, logistical support measures are put in place to be self-sufficient in operating the above activities. The formation of the team will be decided based on the type of the disease, status of the outbreak, requests for assistance by the government of affected country, etc.

12. In July 2016, JDR-Infectious Diseases Response Team was dispatched for the first time to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to assist DRC’s response against a yellow fever outbreak. In cooperation with the government of the DRC, assisting countries and international organizations, the team carried out three main types of work: advising the Ministry of Health, supporting the diagnosis of yellow fever, and providing technical assistance for preparations of vaccination campaigns. In June 2018, another team was dispatched for the second time to the DRC by the request of its government to respond to the Ebola outbreak. The team assisted local efforts in tackling the Ebola outbreak and conducted various assistances to strengthen surveillance systems and laboratory capabilities.

#### **B. Lessons from the past JDR-Infectious Diseases Response Team activities**

13. International emergency assistant teams help combat the outbreak of infectious diseases and can serve as a resource in a public health emergency. It is important for States Parties which have already established or are considering to establish a rapid response team including international emergency response team to share lessons and best practices to increase effectiveness. Lessons from past JDR-Infectious Diseases Response Team activities can be summarized as follows:

- Japan has assisted the DRC in the field of public health for a long time, which results in a cooperative relationship with national ministries and agencies such as the Ministry of Health. It is important to establish a relationship prior to an outbreak so appropriate organizations are involved to provide timely and effective assistance.
- Prior to JDR-Infectious Diseases Response Team deployment, an assessment team was dispatched to the DRC to investigate the needs of the affected areas and coordinate the possibility of further assistance based on discussions with the Government of the DRC and international organizations. Due to the result of this advanced activity, the JDR-Infectious Diseases Response Team was able to provide effective assistance which met the actual needs of the affected country and avoided a duplication of work of other international responders. For example, the team could assist resume the operation of the Institut National de Recherche Biomédicale

laboratory, which was suspended in the middle of June 2016 due to a lack of reagents for detecting the antibodies.

- In order to promote the establishment of a public health system in a recipient country, it would be effective to assist the government's own efforts to contain the infectious disease. For example, in 2018 in the DRC, the JDR-Infectious Diseases Response Team facilitated a point of entry at a quarantine, and afterwards the government made use of this acquired knowledge to respond to the following Ebola outbreak in the eastern part of the country
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**Ninth 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**

2 December 2022

English only

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Geneva, 28 November to 16 December 2022

Item 12 of the agenda

Follow-up to the recommendations and decisions of the Eighth Review  
Conference and the question of future review of the Convention

**Proposal for inclusion in the final document of the Ninth  
Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention on  
“Enhancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment  
as an Integral Part of the Institutional Strengthening of the  
Biological Weapons Convention”**

**Submitted by Panama**

1. The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), which was negotiated from 1969 until 1971 and does not have any gender-related provision.
2. Since 2019, there has been an increased attention to gender considerations within the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), including statements at the Meetings of Experts, the Meeting of States Parties, UNGA Resolutions<sup>1</sup>, research on potential sex-specific effects and gendered impacts of biological weapons<sup>2</sup>, side events and informal exchanges exploring the relevance of gender perspectives in the BWC. Gender is becoming a topical issue for the BWC regime.
3. During the 2020 BWC Meeting of Experts on Institutional Strengthening of the Convention (MX5)<sup>3</sup>, the 2020 Meeting of States Parties<sup>4</sup> and the Preparatory Committee for the Ninth Review Conference<sup>5</sup>, Panama submitted a working paper entitled “*Enhancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment as an Integral Part of the Institutional Strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)*”, which sought to develop a common understanding of the ways that gender equality and women’s empowerment is relevant for the institutional strengthening of the BWC.
4. The annex of the present working paper contains concrete language proposals for inclusion in the final document of the Ninth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention for enhancing gender equality and women’s empowerment in this framework.

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<sup>1</sup> See UNGA Resolutions 74/79, 75/88, 76/67 and document A/C.1/77/L.74.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Dalaqua, Renata Hessmann, James Revill, Alastair Hay, and Nancy Connell. 2019. “*Missing Links: Understanding Sex- and Gender-Related Impacts of Chemical and Biological Weapons.*” UNIDIR, Geneva. <https://doi.org/10.37559/WMD/19/gen1>.

<sup>3</sup> See document BWC/MSP/2020/MX.5/WP.6.

<sup>4</sup> See document BWC/MSP/2020/WP.6.

<sup>5</sup> See document BWC/CONF.IX/PC/WP.8.





## **Annex**

### **Part II: Final Declaration**

#### **Solemn Declaration**

- Their recognition of the importance of the equitable and effective participation of women and men in the framework of the Convention. The Conference recalls relevant United Nations resolutions, such as United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), and acknowledges that, while biological weapons are by nature indiscriminate, their effects can be felt differently by women, men, boys and girls as a result of biological differences, inequalities, social and other determinants of health and that greater attention should be given to their possible impact.

#### **Article IV**

- The Conference recalls United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), which reaffirms the importance of the equal participation and full involvement of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. The Conference encourages States Parties to promote the empowerment of women, including through education, training, mentoring and capacity-building efforts, as appropriate, to participate in the design and implementation of national measures under this Article, and invites States Parties in a position to do so to voluntarily share good practices and experiences in that regard.

#### **Article VII**

- The Conference notes that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the relevance of promoting the collection of data disaggregated by sex, age and other characteristics relevant in national contexts, research and analysis on sex-specific effects and social determinants of health, and the adoption of an age-, gender- and culturally-sensitive approach in strategy for preparedness, response and assistance in the event of the use of biological or toxin weapons.

#### **Article X**

- The Conference encourages State Parties in a position to do so to promote and fund capacity-building programmes under Article X, including a specific gender component, such as traineeships, fellowships and mentorship programmes. The Conference also encourages States Parties to support and fund research under this Article to generate knowledge about the differentiated impacts of biological weapons on women, men, boys and girls.

#### **Article XII**

- The Conference encourages States Parties to promote the equitable participation of women and men in decision-making in the review conferences of the Convention, including gender-balanced BWC Bureau, and to actively support the participation of women in their delegations including through the sponsorship programmes.

### **Part III: Decisions and Recommendations**

- In order to support and increase the participation of developing States Parties in the annual meetings of States Parties, the Conference decides to renew the sponsorship

programme, funded by voluntary contributions from States Parties in a position to provide them. **Gender balance criteria shall apply to the nomination process from each applying developing States Party, as well as to the selection of candidates for the sponsorship programme in order to promote the overall equal representation of women and men in Convention meetings.** The sponsorship programme will continue to be administered by the Implementation Support Unit in consultation with the Chair and Vice-chairs of the Meeting of States Parties (new wording in bold, based on paragraph 10 – Part III of the Final Document of the Eighth Review Conference. Document BWC/CONF.VIII/4).

- The Conference agrees to encourage the equitable and effective participation of women and men in the framework of the Convention. The Conference also agrees to give greater attention to the possible impact of biological weapons on women, men, boys and girls.
  - In view of the increasing participation of women in the work under the Convention and in Convention meetings, the Conference decides that a member of the BWC Bureau will act as gender focal point to advise the Bureau on the integration of a gender perspective; to collect, track and publish data available on the participation of men and women in Convention formal and informal meetings, including as speakers, office-holders, members of the BWC Bureau and subsidiary bodies; and to address reports of harassment, including sexual harassment, during Convention meetings, in line with the Code of Conduct to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, at UN system events. The Conference also decides to adapt the ISU's mandate to allow it to support the work of the gender focal point.
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# **Ninth 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**

2 December 2022

English only

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Geneva, 28 November to 16 December 2022

Item 12 of the agenda

Follow-up to the recommendations and decisions of the Eighth Review Conference and the question of future review of the Convention

## **Engaging the Next Generation in Global Biosecurity: Proposals for strengthening youth participation in the Biological Weapons Convention**

Submitted by Kenya and Panama

### **I. Introduction**

1. The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) constitutes a strong global norm against the threats to global biosecurity arising from the deliberate release of biological agents or toxins. The goal of a world free of biological weapons cannot be achieved without the active and transformative engagement of young women and men in multilateral processes taking place in the framework of the BWC.

2. The world today is home to the largest generation of youth in history. The global population of young people between the ages of 10 and 24 numbers 1.8 billion (a quarter of the world's population), 90 percent of whom reside in developing countries. Yet, many young people in all regions, in particular from the Global South, face barriers and challenges because of their age, and thus limiting their opportunities and potential. This is particularly acute for those belonging to vulnerable groups who have historically suffered multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

3. Armed conflicts disproportionately affect young people, particularly young women, and perpetuate existing forms of violence against them. In a scenario of biological warfare, besides the loss of life, physical and psychological harm, young people are likely to suffer its severe and long-lasting social, cultural, economic and political impacts. The COVID-19 pandemic already provides a window into the "systematic, deep and disproportionate" effects of biological events on youth wellbeing and mental health, especially for young women and in lower-income countries.<sup>1</sup>

4. Youth perspectives in global biosecurity are needed to foster innovative solutions and sustain long-term engagement. Engaging and training early career professionals in global biosecurity now will allow BWC policymakers to access their expertise tomorrow. Graduate students and early career professionals also make up for a large part of biosecurity professionals on the ground level, including in laboratories or within frontline healthcare workforce. Their practical experience is needed to understand how policy can match challenges in the field.

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<sup>1</sup> See Youth and COVID-19: Impacts on job, education, rights and mental well-being. International Labour Organization, 2020. [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/publications/WCMS\\_753026/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/publications/WCMS_753026/lang--en/index.htm)



5. The important role of youth in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security have been reaffirmed by UN Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace and Security, UN General Assembly resolution 74/64 entitled “Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation”, and their subsequent resolutions.

6. The Secretary-General of the United Nations underscores in his Agenda for Disarmament that young people are the ultimate force for change, at the local, national and international levels, to make the world safer and more secure for all. In addition, “Our Common Agenda”, by the Secretary-General includes recommendations for meaningful, diverse and effective youth involvement in United Nations deliberative and decision-making processes.

7. Over the past years, many States Parties and other stakeholders have recognized the need to promote the participation of young people more systematically in the deliberations held under the BWC as well as the value of capacity building programmes in biosafety and biosecurity and platforms involving young scientists, including the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs’ Youth for Disarmament and Youth for Biosecurity Initiative.

8. The present working paper seeks to raise awareness of the positive contributions of young people in developing new ideas to reduce threats from biological weapons through the Youth Declaration for Biosecurity. It also suggests tangible actions that States Parties could agree on at the Ninth Review Conference to further promote meaningful participation by young people in global biosecurity.

## II. About the Youth Declaration for Biosecurity

9. Youth-led structures and initiatives have proven to be an important source of leadership and agency for young people. In the framework of the BWC, these platforms can certainly enhance and support our collective endeavours to build bridges between science and diplomacy.

10. During the current BWC intersessional programme, many youth-led groups have joined forces as a coordinated network to foster collaboration and capacity-building for young people and to promote activities in the margins of BWC official meetings with one common message: the next generation of professionals in the field of life sciences and in other fields of science relevant to the BWC needs to be engaged in multilateral discussions related to emerging biosafety and biosecurity threats and responses.

11. The Youth Declaration for Biosecurity<sup>2</sup>, launched in the margins of the BWC Meeting of States Parties in November 2021, is the outcome of these efforts and emanated from the Youth for Biosecurity Initiative<sup>3</sup>, implemented by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) with the support of the European Union (EU) under EU Council Decision 2019/97<sup>4</sup>.

12. After the conclusion of the Second Edition of the Biosecurity Diplomacy Workshop for Young Scientists from the Global South that was held in 2021, a group of young scientists decided to develop this call-to-action containing a set of recommendations to reduce the threat of biological weapons and to support youth participation in global biosecurity.

13. This initiative was subsequently discussed among young leaders in biosecurity and biosafety from organizations around the globe, including: Nuclear Threat Initiative Global Biological Policy and Programs Team (NTI | bio), the International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA), the International Genetically Engineered Machine Foundation (iGEM), the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security (CHS), and the Next Generation Global Health Security Network (NextGen).

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/disarmament/bwc-youth-declaration-for-biosecurity/>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.un.org/disarmament/biological-weapons/eu-support-to-the-bwc/youth-for-biosecurity-initiative/>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.un.org/disarmament/biological-weapons/eu-support-to-the-bwc>.

14. The Youth Declaration for Biosecurity outlines concrete recommendations for State Parties to the BWC:

- (a) Introduce a BWC Scientific Advisory Group, including youth representatives;
- (b) Create a clear pipeline for biosecurity career advancement;
- (c) Adopt global ethical guidelines and best practices, including the “Tianjin Biosecurity Guidelines for Codes of Conduct for Scientists”;
- (d) Prioritize diversity in youth inclusion;
- (e) Build partnerships linking scientific and policy expertise;
- (f) Standardize biotechnology review and biorisk management;
- (g) Increase biosafety and biosecurity awareness; and
- (h) Build national and regional capacity to rapidly prevent, detect, report, and respond to unusual infectious diseases outbreaks.
- (i) Enhance technology development, diffusion, transfer and commercialisation.

### III. Proposals for the Ninth Review Conference

15. Young people offer perspectives that are critical, forward-looking and grounded in their particular needs, expertise and experiences. Their active and meaningful participation in BWC-related debates and implementation’s activities can greatly contribute to devise innovative and sustainable solutions to the contemporary challenges.

16. The Ninth Review Conference provides the opportunity for States Parties to explore pathways to enhance youth engagement and create space and enabling environment for the next generation of professionals in the field of life sciences and in other fields of science relevant to the BWC to make meaningful substantive contributions in upholding the global norm against biological weapons, and thus building and supporting disarmament, peace and security.

17. In this regard, Kenya and Panama are pleased to submit the Youth Declaration for Biosecurity as an annex to this working paper and respectfully suggest that the Ninth Review Conference of the BWC considers the following practical proposals:

- (a) Welcome the Youth Declaration for Biosecurity and encourage States Parties to incorporate the perspective of youth in policy discussions;
- (b) Encourage States Parties and other stakeholders to broadly disseminate and raise awareness about the Declaration with national authorities and institutions, the scientific community and academia, among others, to exchange information, experiences and good practices about its dissemination and implementation, and to present the outcomes of these efforts during the next intersessional work programme;
- (c) Invite States Parties and other stakeholders to include youth representatives in their delegations to the BWC meetings and activities;
- (d) Promote youth representation, together with geographical representation and gender balance, as a criteria for the composition of possible future bodies, such as a possible science and technology review mechanism, Cooperation Committee (Article X), etc.
- (e) Encourage States Parties to create opportunities for young people to pursue careers in life sciences, biosecurity and biosafety, science diplomacy and in other fields relevant to the BWC in order to maximize the benefits of scientific discoveries for the prevention of diseases and epidemics, the achievement of sustainable development and other peaceful purposes;
- (f) Explore additional measures that could effectively advance youth engagement at the BWC, with options including the creation of a funded platform that would ensure permanent and structured youth participation in the BWC meetings and activities as an ongoing component of the intersessional programme to assist States Parties in their

implementation efforts (i.e., an annual youth forum). States Parties could endorse and support existing youth-centred or youth-led networks such as the Youth for Biosecurity Initiative and consider as an example platform established in other regimes for weapons of mass destruction, such as the CTBTO Youth Group.

## Annex

### The Youth Declaration for Biosecurity

#### Preamble

We, young scientists, and researchers from around the world recommend new actions on Youth, Biosecurity, Biosafety, Disarmament, and Non-Proliferation of biological weapons. The importance of youth in raising awareness and formulating strategies to mitigate the threat of biological weapons is acknowledged in the framework of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and in Action 38 of the disarmament agenda presented by the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres. We call for all BWC States Parties and stakeholders to consider the following sections to empower and engage with young people to create a world free from biological threats.

#### Declaration

##### A. Recommended Actions to Support Youth

There are immediate actions that both the BWC and State Parties can take to support youth participation in global biosecurity:

###### *Introduce a BWC Scientific Advisory Group*

We support the creation of a Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) to assist in the implementation of the BWC articles. The SAG can provide expert advice on science and technology to State Parties and to the Implementation Support Unit under the BWC. This advisory body should represent diverse stakeholders, such as scientists, policy professionals, and diplomats while maintaining an appropriate balance of age, gender, and geography. This SAG should assess the new developments in the life sciences and provide periodic reports to the BWC and member states on the prevention and mitigation of potentially harmful effects. We believe that the appropriate representation of youth and engagement with young scientists through the SAG would be essential for its success.

###### *Create a clear pipeline for biosecurity career advancement*

We call for the inclusion of a Biorisk Management education as part of undergraduate and graduate curricula for biology, chemistry, biochemistry, public policy, and other related majors. In addition, early- and mid-career scientists and policy professionals should receive education through workshops and training initiatives. There is an urgent need to provide training scholarships to low and middle-income countries (LMICs) to advance and strengthen professional skills. Free online courses and resources should be made available to professionals in the Global South. We support the continuation and expansion of the Youth4Biosecurity initiative and other similar activities.

###### *Adopt global ethical guidelines and best practices*

We call for the global adoption of the "Tianjin Biosecurity Guidelines for Codes of Conduct for Scientists"<sup>5</sup> to ensure ethical and responsible conduct in biological research. In addition, we support the sharing of biorisk management knowledge and best practices at national, regional, and global levels to create uniform norms and standards. This will support youth by creating a shared global language and set of practices to foster collaboration among

<sup>5</sup> Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, Tianjin University Center for Biosafety Research and Strategy, Interacademies Partnership. "The Tianjin Biosecurity Guidelines for Codes of Conduct for Scientists." July 2021. <https://www.interacademies.org/publication/tianjin-biosecurity-guidelines-codes-conduct-scientists>.

emerging scientists and biosecurity leaders across regions. We call for the creation of appropriate mechanisms to facilitate this through the BWC.

*Prioritize diversity in youth inclusion*

We support the greater inclusion of diverse voices in biorisk management. We call for increased youth representation in all biosecurity-related matters on different platforms. We encourage mainstreaming youth participation in all deliberations through appropriate youth quotas in the respective delegations and representation of youth bodies such as young science academies. We also call for qualitative and quantitative standards to ensure diversity across gender, ethnic, cultural, and geographic backgrounds in deliberations and decision-making processes. Youth from the Global South are severely underrepresented due to a lack of awareness and available opportunities, therefore special mechanisms are needed to increase their participation.

**B. Further Actions Endorsed by Youth**

In addition to the specific actions outlined above, we also endorse the following more general principles to strengthen global biosecurity capacity:

*Build partnerships linking scientific and policy expertise*

We call for partnerships linking scientists, science policy professionals, biosecurity experts, and diplomats. Biosecurity Science Diplomacy should be promoted as an area of active research involving practitioners and academics. These linkages should reinforce strong scientific advisory mechanisms to inform policy-makers and diplomats. We support thematic, regional, and global partnerships with all stakeholders, including the NGOs, industry, and academic bodies, to fulfill the objectives of the BWC. These partnerships should focus on research, awareness-raising, and capacity building to complement ongoing BWC-ISU activities. Furthermore, we call for increased North-South and South-South cooperation to empower youth, especially women from the Global South, in biosecurity. We encourage partnerships between science organizations, academies, and associations. Think tanks, NGOs, and academic centers should be engaged based on their respective strengths and areas of interest. A global network of these stakeholders should be created to facilitate interdisciplinary, multinational, and cross-sectoral communication and collaborations. The BWC-ISU could provide the mandate and resources to create and lead this network.

*Standardize biotechnology review and biorisk management*

We recognize the importance of having a robust Biorisk Management System in place at life science institutions and the integral role they could play in implementing BWC mandates. We call for the adoption of such systems and standards<sup>6</sup> by all institutions involved in life science research. We encourage the creation of an integrated framework for oversight of strategic plans to minimize the potential dual-use of life sciences research.

This framework should be created after consultation with relevant stakeholders and should contain action points or policies at institutional, national, and international levels to prevent the weaponization of biological agents and toxins and timely respond to these challenges. A comprehensive biorisk assessment and management tool can be used to ensure the successful implementation of the framework. The tool should assess risks while also recognizing benefits and should be relatable and adaptable to all Member States.

In addition to experts and policymakers, we recommend the inclusion of young researchers, laboratorians, and youth-driven scientific organizations in the recurring intersectional discourse on the development and implementation of biorisk management systems within the BWC.

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<sup>6</sup> Standards such as the ISO 35001 (Biorisk management for laboratories and other related organizations) and the *WHO Laboratory Biosafety Manual, 4th Edition*.



*Increase biosafety and biosecurity awareness*

We support biosafety and biosecurity awareness initiatives through various means, such as informational events, open-access publications, and social media. Different strategies must be employed to inform and engage diverse stakeholders such as scientists, policy researchers, institutes, diplomats, policy-makers, and the general public. We call for more conversation across disciplines to develop and disseminate a more comprehensive understanding of biosecurity. International organizations such as UNODA, UNRCPD, UNIDIR, and UNLIREC play a leading role in facilitating these discussions.

*Build national and regional capacity*

We support capacity building and harmonization of national and regional guidelines to rapidly prevent, detect, report, and respond to unusual infectious diseases outbreaks. Further, we call for the exchange of biosecurity best practices at national and regional levels.

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