

Information Note¹

- Event:** Meeting of Experts 3 (Strengthening National Implementation) to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC)
- Organizer:** Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit
- Date and Venue:** 5 August 2019, UN Office in Geneva
- Participants:** BWC States Parties, Signatory States, States neither Parties nor signatories, specialised agencies and other international organisations, NGO representatives

Background

On 26 June 2019, the Chairs of the 2019 Meetings of Experts to the BWC – Ambassador Yann Hwang, Ambassador Victor Dolidze, Mr Yury Nickolaichik, Ms Melanie Reddiar, Mr Usman Iqbal Jadoon and Mr Laurent Masméjean– sent a letter to the Chair of the 1540 Committee inviting a representative to take part in the 2019 Meetings of Experts to the BWC.

The purpose of the Meetings was to have technical discussions on a range of topics agreed upon by BWC States Parties at the 2017 Meeting of States Parties, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X (MX1); review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the BWC (MX2); strengthening national implementation (MX3); assistance, response and preparedness (MX4); and institutional strengthening of the BWC (MX5). Each MX adopted a factual report reflecting its deliberations, including possible outcomes. The Committee approved the participation of an Expert in MX3.

Highlights

A number of working papers had been submitted for consideration by the BWC States Parties at MX 3 including:

- Strengthening National Implementation: The United States National Biodefense Strategy (United States)
- Proposals to Enhance Confidence-Building Measures Participation (Japan, co-sponsored by Australia, Germany, Malaysia and Republic of Korea)
- National Implementation under Article IV (Islamic Republic of Iran)
- Confidence Building Measure G - Declaration of Vaccine Production Facilities: identifying additional relevant facilities (Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom)
- An Exchange Platform for Voluntary Transparency Exercises (France)

¹ For information – not an official report. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the 1540 Committee or of the organisers or participants in the event.

- Strengthening National Implementation (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and other States Parties to the BWC)

After the procedural agenda items, the participants in MX3 heard statements and presentations under agenda item 4 – measures related to Article IV of the Convention – from Venezuela (on behalf of NAM), the Group of Experts assisting the 1540 Committee, the European Union, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The 1540 Expert, in his statement to the BWC States Parties, emphasised that resolution 1540 (2004) and the BWC are both complementary and mutually reinforcing, and that their full and effective implementation remain key to strengthening the global non-proliferation architecture by curbing the threat posed by biological weapons, their means of delivery and related materials. He added that the UN Security Council’s 1540 Committee continues to work with States to implement the key provisions of the resolution through appropriate and effective national laws and domestic control measures. The expert from Belgium presented on a recent African swine fever outbreak in wild boars in the Wallonia region of Belgium, and how they managed the biorisk arising therefrom. Additionally, the OPCW gave an overview of the status of national implementation of the CWC among its Member States and how they are working to improve the current figures.

The participants next heard statements under agenda item 5 – Confidence-Building Measures (CBM) submissions in terms of quantity and quality – from Venezuela (on behalf of NAM) and under Agenda item 6 – Various Ways to Promote Transparency and Confidence Building under the BWC – from Venezuela (on behalf of NAM), Russian Federation and the United States.

The participants next heard statements under Agenda item 7 – the role of international cooperation and assistance under Article X, in support of strengthening the implementation of the Convention – from Venezuela (on behalf of NAM), Venezuela (national capacity), the United States, Japan and the Netherlands. The participants also heard a presentation from a Guest of the Meeting, Dr Anastasia Natasha Trataris-Rebisz with the National Institute for Communicable Diseases in South Africa. Dr Trataris-Rebisz described her institute’s initiative to strengthen biosecurity and biosafety in African countries, which is intended to develop and implement strategies for addressing capacity gaps at both the national and regional levels to measurably advance achievement of WHO Joint External Evaluation (JEE) biosafety and biosecurity targets across Africa.

Finally, the participants heard statements under Agenda item 8 – issues related to Article III, including effective measures of export control, in full conformity with all Articles of the Convention, including Article X – from Venezuela (on behalf of NAM) and the United States.

Additional Comments

For further information, please contact the 1540 Committee experts by e-mail at 1540experts@un.org.