

Information Note¹

- Event:** *Biological Weapons Convention Meeting of States Parties (BWC MSP)*
- Organizers:** BWC States Parties and the Implementation Support Unit
- Date and venue:** 9-13 December 2013, Geneva, Switzerland
- Participants:** Over one hundred States Parties to the Convention; one signatory State (Myanmar); one observer State- Israel (neither party or signatory); United Nations (1540 Committee and its Group of Experts, UNODA, UNICRI); observer organizations (European Union, International Committee of the Red Cross, INTERPOL, NATO, OPCW, WHO, and OIE); scientific, professional, commercial, academic, and other non-governmental organizations (Anser Institute, Bioweapons Prevention Project, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Global Green USA, Global Health Consultants, International Network of Engineers and Scientists for Global Responsibility, King's College London, Pax Christi International, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, Research Group of Arms Control of University of Hamburg, UK Royal Society, University of Bath, University of Bradford, University of Exeter, and VERTIC. A list of all participants in the Meeting of States Parties is contained in document BWC/MSP/2013/MISC.1 at: <http://www.unog.ch/bwc/meeting>

1. **Objectives of the BWC Meeting of Experts**

The 2013 Meeting of States Parties (MSP) is the halfway point of four years of meetings in the third inter-sessional process for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The MSP was preceded by a one-week Meeting of Experts (MX) that was held in August (NB: the 1540 Group of Experts participated in the BWC MX, see Information Note at:

<http://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/pdf/Information%20Note%20Geneva%20BWC%20Experts%20Meeting%202013-49.pdf>).

2. **Background**

The third inter-sessional process was agreed at the Seventh BWC Review Conference that was held in December 2011. The inter-sessional process meetings are intended to be practical and focused on promoting ideas and learning from experiences in order to develop common understandings and effective actions. The 2013 meetings were chaired by Judit Körömi of Hungary, the Special Representative of the Foreign Minister for Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, with two Vice-Chairs – Ambassador Mazlan Muhammad of Malaysia and Ambassador Urs Schmid of Switzerland.

There are three on-going topics, also known as the standing agenda items, of the third inters-sessional process: 'Cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X', 'Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the

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

Convention’, and ‘Strengthening national implementation’. This year the meetings also discussed ‘How to enable fuller participation in the CBMs’, the same topic that was under discussion in 2012.

3. **Highlights**

In her opening remarks at the BWC MSP, the Chair (Judit Körömi of Hungary, the Special Representative of the Foreign Minister for Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation) noted that this inter-sessional process had a different character from those which had gone before. In the earlier sets of meetings, each year would deal with a distinct topic and therefore the report from each meeting was ‘self-contained’. The format of this inter-sessional process, with three standing agenda items and a biennial topic, means that time is spent considering subject areas each year on a repeating basis. This requires some arrangement to be able to link the reports of each year together in order to provide input into the Eighth BWC Review Conference to be held in 2016.

On the opening day, in accordance with the Programme of Work (BWC/MSP/2013/2), the BWC MSP held a general debate in which the following 35 States Parties made statements: Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada (on behalf of ‘JACKSNNZ’ – [an informal grouping of Japan, Australia, Canada, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Norway and New Zealand]), Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Norway, New Zealand. China, Colombia, Cuba, Czech republic, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran (on behalf of the Non Aligned Movement and Other States), Iraq, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Libya, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, China, Russia, Indonesia, Denmark, Pakistan, Russian Federation, South Africa, Thailand, Ukraine, United States of America and Uruguay. The European Union, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the 1540 Committee also made statements in the general debate as international organizations. The 1540 Committee statement as delivered by Mr. Michael Aho, 1540 Committee member, is posted on the 1540 Committee website (video and printed version) at:

<http://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/transparency-and-outreach/outreach-events/member-statements.shtml>

Following the general debate, during an informal session, the Meeting heard statements from 10 non-governmental organizations.

Several States Parties (Albania, Belarus, Cuba, Iraq, Mexico, and Peru) and one international organization (Interpol) noted in their statements, interventions or presentations their efforts on strengthening the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). The 1540 Committee expert presented in the BWC MSP plenary under the *Standing agenda item: strengthening national implementation*, on “*United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540: Sharing of Experiences, Lessons Learned, & Effective Practices*”. She provided examples of national reports and national implementation action plans submitted to the 1540 Committee that discuss implementation of BWC as well as specific anti-terrorism measures in national legislation. The 1540 Committee expert also provide excerpts of national reports on working with / informing the industry and the public and discussed the Annex XVII of the 2008 Committee report and Annex XVI of the 2011 Committee report to the Security Council related to sharing of national experiences in implementing resolution 1540 (2004). She concluded by informing the delegates that the Chair of the 1540 Committee sent a letter (dated 04 November 2013) to all States and a list of relevant organizations to request information on relevant effective experience, lessons learned and effective practice, in the areas covered by resolution 1540 (2004). Provided that BWC States Parties and relevant organizations are responsive to this request, the upcoming compilation of inter alia experiences, lessons learned and effective practices in bio risk management will contribute to strengthening the BWC national implementation by States Parties. In addition, since resolution 1540 (2004) obligations extend to all States, such compilation may also serve to promote to non-States Parties the norms of BWC and its common objectives with resolution 1540 (2004) on safeguarding biological agents, facilities and technology against nefarious uses.

All statements and presentations are posted on the ISU website at <http://www.unog.ch/bwc/meeting>.

The Report of the Meeting of States Parties (available online on the ISU website at <http://www.unog.ch/bwc/meeting>) reflects the States Parties' common understandings on each of the three standing agenda items and the biennial item. In the Report of the Meeting of States Parties, States Parties were encouraged to continue sharing information at subsequent meetings of the inter-sessional programme on any actions, measures or other steps that they may have taken on issues under consideration in the inters-sessional programme, in order to further promote common understanding and effective action and to facilitate the Eighth Review Conference's consideration of the work and outcome of these meetings and its decision on any further action, in accordance with the decision of the Seventh Review Conference (BWC/CONF.VII/7, Part III, paragraph 15).]

There were also a series of thematic side events organized during the MSP, as follows:

(1) *'Developments in Science and Technology: Strengthening National Biological Risk Management'*. Presentations were given by Brett Edwards, University of Bath, on 'Ensuring regime responsiveness to developments in science and technology'; Jonathan Forman, Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, on 'Chemical weapons disarmament in a technologically evolving world'; Alemka Markotic, Croatian Academy of Science, on 'An international roadmap for bioforensics: a Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, US National Academy of Sciences, UK Royal Society and International Union of Microbiological Societies initiative'; Dana Perkins, 1540 Committee expert, on 'UN Security Council resolution 1540: emerging trends, sharing of experiences, lessons learned and effective practices'; and Gerald Walther, University of Bradford, on 'The 2013 BioWeapons Monitor: launch and plans for the future'. The event was chaired by Ambassador Serhiy Komisarenko of Ukraine.

(2) *'Consolidating Biosecurity Education'*. Presentations were given by Tatyana Novosiolova, Landau Network Centro Volta, on 'Teaching biosecurity to neuroscientists'; Brian Rappert, University of Exeter, on 'On the dual uses of science and ethics'; Jo Husbands, member of the OPCW SAB TWG on Outreach and Education on activities in the group; and Ryszard Slominski, Polish Academy of Sciences on 'Promoting education about dual use issues in the life sciences'. The event was chaired by Wojciech Flera, Deputy Permanent Representative of Poland.

(3) *'EU NRBC Action Plan: How the exchange of good practices can improve the surveillance of high risk pathogens'*. Presentations were given by Christophe Genisset, General Secretariat for Defense and National Security, France; Saskia Rutjes, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, the Netherlands; and Bjarke Kirkemann, Centre for Biosecurity and Biopreparedness, Denmark on biosafety and biosecurity in their countries... The event was chaired by Ambassador Jean-Hugues Simon-Michel of France.

(4) *'The Biosecurity Subworking Group of the Global Partnership against the spread of materials and weapons of mass destruction'*. Presentations were given by Keiji Fukuda (WHO), Carol Walters (USA), Zalini Yunus (Malaysia), John Griffin (Canada), Sylvia Groneick and Florian Lewerenz (Germany). The event was chaired by Ambassador Matthew Rowland (UK).

(5) *'Improving biosecurity - assessment of dual use research'*. Presentations were given by Jan Wilschut (University Medical Centre Groningen), Koos van der Bruggen (KNAW Biosecurity Committee) and Malcolm Dando (Bradford University). The event was chaired by Kathryn Nixdorff (Darmstadt University of Technology).

(6) *'United Nations Secretary-General's mechanism for investigation of alleged use of biological weapons'*. Introductory remarks were given by Sylvia Groneick (Germany) who chaired the meeting, Jean-Hugues Simon-Michel (France) and Uffe Balslev (Denmark). Presentations were given by Nikita Smidovich (UNODA), Nicolas Isla (WHO), Dzenan Gino Sahovic (Umeå CBRNE Centre), Nicolas Coussière, Ministry of Defence (France), Asbjørn Toft Dahl, Centre for Biosecurity and Biopreparedness (Denmark), and Robert Grunow, Robert Koch Institute (Germany).

(7) *'Monitoring compliance relevant data - Launch of the Hamburg Research Group's trade monitoring website'*. It was introduced by Ambassador Michael Biontino (Germany). Presentations were given by Gunnar Jeremias (University of Hamburg), Thomas Reinhold (University of Hamburg) and Dana Perkins (1540 Committee expert).

4. **Additional comments**

For further information, please contact the 1540 Committee's Group of Experts by e-mail at 1540experts@un.org.