

**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**

Geneva, 11-13 December 2023

Secretariat:
BWC Implementation Support Unit
United Nations Office for Disarmament
Affairs (Geneva Branch)
Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

tel: +41 (0)22 917 2230
e-mail: bwc@un.org
web: [www.un.org/disarmament/biological
weapons/](http://www.un.org/disarmament/biologicalweapons/)

To the Permanent Representatives of the States Parties
and Signatories to the Convention on the Prohibition
of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological
(Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction

29 September 2023

**ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 2023 MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE
BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

Excellency,

I am writing in my capacity as the Chairperson of the 2023 Meeting of States Parties of the Biological Weapons Convention.

I would like to sincerely thank my regional group for nominating me to this important position and express my appreciation to all States Parties for supporting my appointment. I look forward to hearing from the other regional groups concerning their nominations for the two Vice-Chair positions.

I was pleased to observe the very constructive discussions and successful outcome of the second session of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention which met last month. I would like to express my appreciation to Ambassador Flavio Damico for his chairing of the meeting and to all members of the bureau and the Friends of the Chair for their dedication to the new intersessional programme agreed by the Ninth Review Conference. I hope that this positive attitude will continue during the Meeting of States Parties as well.

Meeting of States Parties

The Review Conference decided that the Meeting of States Parties will take place from 11-13 December 2023 in Geneva. The Meeting of States Parties has a duration of only three days, so we will have to use our time as efficiently as possible. The mandate of the Meeting of States Parties is similar to those in previous intersessional programmes. Following the opening formalities, we will have a general debate during which States Parties, Signatory States, Observer States and Observer Agencies can make statements. In line with longstanding existing practice at BWC meetings, we will also set aside an informal session to hear statements from non-governmental organizations.

Following the conclusion of the general debate, the Meeting of States Parties will receive an update from Ambassador Damico as Chairperson of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention. Subsequently, the Meeting of States Parties will consider the management of the intersessional programme, particularly budgetary and financial matters, as well as progress with universalization of the Convention, the annual report of the Implementation Support Unit and the arrangements for the meetings in 2024.

In order to advance our preparations for the Meeting of States Parties, and to meet the processing deadlines for translation of official documents, I have prepared a draft of the provisional agenda which is attached to this letter. The draft is based very closely on similar documents from previous Meetings of States Parties. The draft provisional agenda replicates most of the previous agenda items but includes a new agenda item on "Update by the Chairperson of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention".

The draft provisional agenda needs to be submitted for translation by 16 October 2023 so I would kindly request any feedback to be provided via my Permanent Mission or the Implementation Support Unit as soon as possible. Even once translated and issued, the document is of course still provisional pending its final adoption during the opening formalities of the Meeting of States Parties.

States Parties wishing to be inscribed in the list of speakers for the general debate or wishing to submit working papers should contact the Implementation Support Unit on bwc@un.org

Universalization of the Convention

As you are aware, the Convention now has 185 States Parties and has grown steadily in recent years. I would like to welcome South Sudan which is the most recent State Party to the Convention. My mandate as Chairperson requires me to promote the universalization of the Convention and I will therefore be reaching out to those countries which have not yet joined the BWC to understand their situation and encourage them to consider joining. I am aware that several countries are making good progress towards joining the Convention and I hope that they will do so before the Meeting of States Parties in December.

We should continue to strive for universal adherence to the BWC and I would be happy to discuss any initiatives from States Parties and to support your efforts in this regard. I will submit a report on universalization activities to the Meeting of States Parties and I would like to kindly request States Parties to inform me of any relevant activities to be included in the report.

Financial situation of the Convention

The financial situation of the Convention has improved in recent years, largely as a result of the package of financial measures adopted at the 2018 Meeting of States Parties. However, the fact remains that a significant number of States Parties have still not paid their assessed contributions for 2023, and many also have outstanding amounts owed for previous years. Full and timely payment of assessed contributions is necessary in order for us to conduct the activities that we agreed to at the Ninth Review Conference.

I would therefore like to encourage all States Parties to fulfil the obligation to pay their assessed contributions for 2023 in full as soon as possible, and to request any States Parties with outstanding contributions from earlier years, to clear them as soon as possible. As mandated, I will report to the Meeting of States Parties on the overall financial situation of the Convention.

Going forwards, I intend to work in a transparent and fully inclusive manner throughout the course of this year. I would be happy to brief the regional groups as and when requested and I am happy for delegations to contact me privately via my Permanent Mission.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Ambassador Cristian Espinosa Cañizares
Chairperson of the 2023 Meeting of States Parties
Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations Office and Other International
Organizations in Geneva

Attachment:

Draft provisional agenda of the 2023 Meeting of States Parties

Annex

Draft provisional agenda of the 2023 Meeting of States Parties

Submitted by the Chairperson

1. Opening of the meeting.
 2. Adoption of the agenda.
 3. Adoption of the programme of work.
 4. Adoption of the rules of procedure.
 5. General debate.
 6. Update by the Chairperson of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention.
 7. Management of the intersessional programme: Budgetary and financial matters.
 8. Progress with universalization of the Convention.
 9. Annual report of the Implementation Support Unit.
 10. Arrangements for the meetings in 2024.
 11. Adoption of the report of the meeting.
 12. Closing of the meeting.
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