
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

13 December 2023

English only

2023 Meeting
Geneva, 11–13 December 2023

Statement by H. E. Ms Anna Jardfelt

Submitted by Sweden

Chair,

Sweden is fully aligned with the statement by the European Union. I would like to make a few additional remarks in a national capacity.

First let me welcome your appointment, Ambassador, as the chair of this Meeting of States Parties and assure you of the full support of my delegation for your efforts towards a successful outcome.

Let me also express Sweden's appreciation for the work of the Implementation Support Unit.

Further, I would like to welcome South Sudan as the newest State Party to the BTWC. The membership now stands at 185 States Parties. We are steadily progressing towards the goal of the universalization of the Convention.

Chair,

I have four items I would like to highlight.

Firstly, the BTWC constitutes a central part of the global norm against biological weapons, and we must continue our efforts to strengthen the Convention and its implementation. The possibility – and indeed the threat - that states or non-state actors could develop and use biological weapons is real.

Progress in science and technology and the globalization of relevant expertise have increased the proliferation risks related to biological weapons. Technical knowledge and equipment used for legitimate purposes could also be exploited to develop new types of biological weapons. As States Parties, we must join forces to monitor such science and technology and avoid their misuse. We are encouraged by the steps that have now been taken, with the aim of setting up a S&T review mechanism. We also welcome progress made on the development of a mechanism to facilitate and support the full implementation of international cooperation and assistance under Article X.

Secondly, we are now well into the second year of Russia's illegal, unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine. Sweden condemns in the strongest terms Russia's brutal invasion and reaffirms its unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

We also strongly reject Russia's continued disinformation campaign and the groundless accusations directed against Ukraine for having a US-funded biological weapons program. These false allegations undermine legitimate international cooperation and the Convention itself. It shows a lack of respect for the treaty obligations Russia has once committed to uphold.



Thirdly, the Secretary General's Mechanism is indispensable for the international community's ability to deal with allegations of use of biological and chemical weapons. Its independence must be safeguarded. Sweden, through the Swedish Defence Research Agency, continues to engage in exercises and activities to increase the level of laboratory preparedness for possible future UN investigations and we welcome all the work conducted by States Parties to ensure the continued operational readiness of the Mechanism. It is reassuring to note that attempts to undermine the UNSGM are strongly rejected, and the already limited support for such attempts is declining.

As my fourth and final point, Sweden is firmly convinced that a gender equality perspective on all aspects of our collective work will strengthen international peace and security. Sweden encourages all state parties to adopt a gender perspective in the context of the BTWC and on disarmament in general.

With these words I conclude, and wish us all a productive meeting

Thank you, Chair.
