

**Second Meeting of the Working Group
on the Strengthening of the Biological Weapons
Convention**

7 – 18 August 2023



United Nations Office at Geneva

Palais des Nations

Geneva, Switzerland

Introduction

1. The Second Meeting of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention will take place between 7 and 18 August 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland. In line with the indicative schedule of activities adopted at the First Meeting of the Working Group in March 2023, the following topics will be addressed:
 - 7 to 9 August 2023: international cooperation and assistance
 - 10 August 2023: international cooperation and assistance mechanism
 - 11, 14 to 15 August 2023: scientific and technological developments
 - 16 August 2023: science and technology review mechanism
 - 17 to 18 August 2023: national implementation
2. The Working Group will meet in-person in Room XIX, in the E Building of the Palais des Nations, United Nations Office at Geneva, accessible via the Pregny Gate. Sessions will take place from 10:00-13:00 and 15:00-18:00 on the abovementioned dates.
3. The agenda of the Working Group, as adopted at its first session is available online as document [BWC/WG/1/1](#). Additional documentation and other information will be posted, as it becomes available, in the [UNODA Meetings Place](#).
4. This document has been prepared by the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and provides practical information for participants in the second Meeting of the Working Group. The information contained in this document is correct as of the time of writing (30 May 2023).

Registration

5. Formal credentials are not required for the meetings of the Working Group. Instead, all participants need to be registered by **21 July 2023** in accordance with the [BWC Rules of Procedure](#) and following the procedures described below:
 - a. In accordance with Rule 1, **States Parties** wishing to participate should send, through their Permanent Missions, a letter or *note verbale* to the ISU notifying the full names and titles of the members of the delegation. The head of delegation should be clearly indicated. Only the names of participants listed in the letter or *note verbale* will be included in the official lists of participants of the Meeting of the Working Group.
 - b. In accordance with Rule 44.1, **Signatory States** wishing to participate should send, through their Permanent Missions, a letter or *note verbale* to the ISU notifying the full names and titles of the members of the delegation. The head of delegation should be clearly indicated. Only the names of participants listed in the letter or *note verbale* will be included in the official lists of participants of the Meeting of the Working Group.
 - c. In accordance with Rule 44.2(a), **States which are neither parties nor signatories to the Convention** may apply to participate in the Meeting of the Working Group. Observer status is granted by the decision of the Meeting at its opening session. A letter or *note verbale* should be addressed, through their Permanent Missions, to the ISU applying for observer status and listing the full names and titles of the members

of the delegation. The head of delegation should be clearly indicated. Only the names of participants listed in the letter or *note verbale* will be included in the official lists of participants of the Meeting of the Working Group.

- d. In accordance with Rule 44.4, **international organizations** may apply to participate in the Meeting of the Working Group as observer agencies. Observer agency status is granted by the decision of the Working Group, which will consider and decide on requests for observer agency status at its opening session. A letter or *note verbale* should be addressed to the ISU applying for observer agency status, listing the full names and titles of the members of the delegation. The name of the head of delegation should be clearly indicated. Only the names of participants listed in the letter or *note verbale* will be included in the official lists of participants of the Meeting of the Working Group.
 - e. In accordance with Rule 44.5, **NGOs and academic institutions** may register to attend public sessions of the Working Group. A letter on the official letterhead of the organization should be addressed to the ISU applying for attendance of the public sessions of the Meeting and listing the full names and titles of the representatives who will attend. NGOs and academic institutions that have not previously attended a BWC meeting should indicate previous interactions between the organization and the United Nations in relation to disarmament and non-proliferation issues. A mission statement or summary of work of the organization should be provided. Only the names of participants listed in the letter will be included in the official lists of participants of the Meeting of the Working Group.
6. In order to promote gender equality, all States Parties, Signatory States, States not Party, international organizations and non-governmental organizations are strongly encouraged to strive for gender balance within their own delegations.
 7. *Notes verbales* and letters should be submitted no later than **21 July 2023**.

Access to the Palais des Nations

8. Please note that in addition to the steps described above, all participants, except those already in possession of a UNOG security badge, need to register online at <https://indico.un.org/event/1003811/> by **21 July 2023**.
9. Participants who have already registered for a previous meeting at the United Nations Office at Geneva, can simply log in to their existing account and register for the Meeting of the Working Group.
10. Participants registering for the first time will need to provide details of their passport or national identification card and upload a passport quality photo.
11. All participants will need to upload a copy of the *note verbale* or letter from their delegation. If the requested documents are not attached, the system will reject the application.
12. A [user guide](#) is available for reference. For any queries, please contact the Implementation Support Unit at bwc@un.org

13. Once your application has been approved, you will receive a UN Event Pass via e-mail. Security badges can be collected from the Pass and Identification Unit at the Pregny Gate of the Palais des Nations. Participants are advised to come to the Pregny Gate well in advance to allow enough time for security checks. Only participants approved for in-person participation will receive a UN Event Pass.
14. Delegations from States and international organisations can collect their security badges from the Pregny Gate as of 12:00 on 4 August 2023. Please bring a copy of the delegations' letter or *note verbale* or the UN Event Pass received after your successful online registration in order to facilitate the process.
15. NGO representatives can collect their badges in person from 08:00 on 7 August 2023 from the Pregny Gate. A valid passport or national identification card will have to be produced along with the UN Event Pass. Only representatives who have registered online and whose names have been properly included in the letter described above will be granted a security badge.
16. For security reasons, identification badges must always be worn and visible to UN Security staff while inside the Palais des Nations.

Attending the Meeting of the Working Group

17. All formal sessions of the second Meeting of the Working Group will be held in-person in Room XIX (see map below). Details of the meetings scheduled for each day can be found on the screens opposite Door 40 in the E Building.
18. Simultaneous interpretation into the six official UN languages will be provided in the main conference room and via the live webcast on [UN Web TV](#). The video recordings will also be archived on UN Web TV to be watched later. Live audio from the Review Conference in any of the six official languages can also be accessed via the [Listen Live](#) website and audio recordings will be available soon after the end of each session via the [Digital Recordings Portal](#). Automatically generated transcripts of the public sessions in English, French and Spanish will be available via <https://indico.un.org/event/1003811/>.
19. An up-to-date timetable of events, including formal meetings, side events and informal sessions will be available on the [UNODA Meetings Place](#).
20. Electronic boards outside each meeting room will clearly indicate whether the session in progress is public or private. All interested parties can attend public sessions. Private meetings are for States Parties only.
21. Food and drinks are strictly prohibited in the conference rooms. Activities involving food and drinks are allowed only in the areas designated for this purpose.

Documentation

22. Prior to the Working Group Meeting, pre-session documents will be made available on the [UNODA Meetings Place](#). The agenda for the Working Group is already available as document [BWC/WG/1/1](#).
23. States Parties wishing to submit working papers to the second Meeting of the Working Group should do so by **31 July 2023** by sending Microsoft Word versions to bwc@un.org. Please get in touch to discuss any specific requirements. Working papers are not translated or edited but delegations are able to submit courtesy translations into English if they so wish.
24. States and international organizations granted observer status might also wish to provide information to delegations at the Meeting of the Working Group. Documents should be submitted in electronic and hard copy to the ISU. Electronic copies should be sent to bwc@un.org.
25. During the Meeting of the Working Group, in-session documents will be made available on [UNODA Meetings Place](#) as they are issued. Paper copies of documents will not be issued in the conference room.

Presentations and interventions

26. There will be no general debate session during the Meeting of the Working Group. Delegations can however deliver presentations, introduce working papers and make interventions from the floor. The Chairperson of the Working Group will issue a tentative programme of work for the Meeting of the Working Group prior to the Meeting.
27. Delegations wishing to take the floor during the Meeting of the Working Group are requested to contact the Implementation Support Unit in advance. Copies of presentations etc should be sent to the Implementation Support Unit at bwc@un.org. In order to assist the interpreters, copies of presentations and interventions should also be sent to speeches@un.org.
28. Practical information for speakers and participants in the Working Group Meeting can be found at <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/conference-management/participant>

Side events

29. Room availability is limited because of the renovations of the Palais des Nations under the Strategic Heritage Plan. Side-events will be held in Rooms XXII and XXV (both also in the E Building).
30. Potential side event organizers are kindly requested to fill in the [online request form](#). All applications will be reviewed and submitted for approval to the BWC office-holders.

Rooms and facilities for participants

31. Meetings for regional groups or other groups of States Parties will be arranged upon request. Regional group coordinators are invited to contact the Implementation Support Unit well in advance to guarantee room availability. The Implementation Support Unit will assist the coordinators of the different groups with the announcements for such meetings and participants are kindly invited to check the notice boards and the [UNODA Meetings Place](#) regularly for additional details.
32. Free wifi access is available in the meeting rooms and generally throughout the Palais des Nations.
33. Photocopying facilities will not be available to participants.
34. The closest cafeteria is the Serpent Bar which can be found behind Room XVIII on the first floor of the E Building.
35. A UBS bank is located at Door 41 on the second floor of Building E (see [map](#)) and the SAFI (a general shop) can be found at Door 1, S Building (see [map](#)).

BWC Sponsorship Programme

36. In order to support and increase the participation of developing States Parties¹ in annual BWC meetings, the Ninth Review Conference (in 2022) decided to renew the Sponsorship Programme established by the Seventh Review Conference (in 2011).
37. The Sponsorship Programme is administered by the Implementation Support Unit in consultation with the office-holders and is funded by voluntary contributions from States Parties.
38. Priority for sponsorship will be given to those developing States Parties which have previously not participated in BWC meetings or have been unable to regularly send experts from capital. Sponsorship may also be provided, depending on the availability of resources, to enhance participation by States not party to the BWC in order to promote the universalization of the Convention.
39. Further information about the Sponsorship Programme for the 2023 BWC meetings can be found [here](#).

Practical information

40. The map below shows the main conference rooms, entrances and facilities within the Palais des Nations. It also shows the nearest bus and tram stops outside the Palais. A more detailed version of the map is also [available online](#).

¹ Please refer to the DAC List of ODA Recipients at <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>



41. Additional practical information covering access for people with disabilities, public transport, parking and taxis is available at <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/practical-information/delegates>
42. Participants should also note that due to the ongoing renovations of the Palais des Nations several entrances are currently closed and alternative circulation routes will have to be used. More information is available at <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/about/map/circulation>

Hotel accommodation and visas

43. The ISU cannot offer financial or logistical support to assist with travel to, accommodation during, or other costs related to attending the Meeting of the Working Group, except for experts selected under the [BWC Sponsorship Programme](#). Practical information about accommodation in Geneva can be found on the website of the [Geneva Welcome Centre](#).
44. Participants are responsible for making their own arrangements for visas, travel and related costs. Further information relating to the procedures and measures concerning the issuance of visas for Switzerland is available by contacting the Swiss embassy or consulate in the participant's country of residence or by referring to the [website](#) of the Swiss Federal Office for Migration. Further information is available from the [Permanent Mission of Switzerland](#).

Participants' behaviour at UN system events

45. The organizations of the United Nations system are committed to enabling events at which everyone can participate in an inclusive, respectful and safe environment. UN system events are guided by the highest ethical and professional standards, and all participants are expected to behave with integrity and respect towards all participants attending or involved with any UN system event.

46. Advancing the Secretary-General's "zero tolerance" vision, and priority agenda to address sexual harassment in the workplace, a [Model Code of Conduct](#) has been developed to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, at UN system events.
47. The [Model Code of Conduct](#) is not a legal document but aims to prevent harassment from occurring at UN system events by sharing expectations of standards of conduct in advance of an event, as well as to support victims by ensuring they are aware that harassment is not tolerated at UN system events and what steps they can take if they are harassed or witness harassment.
48. The [Model Code of Conduct](#) applies to all participants of any BWC meetings.

Secretariat

49. Further enquiries regarding attendance and participation in the Meeting of the Working Group should be addressed to:

BWC Implementation Support Unit
United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
United Nations Office at Geneva
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland
Email: bwc@un.org