

Confidence-Building Measures under the Biological Weapons Convention

Information Briefing by the BWC ISU

**Third Session of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention
4 - 8 December 2023**

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Aim and objectives of CBMs

... to **prevent or reduce the occurrence of ambiguities, doubts and suspicions**, and in order to **improve international cooperation in the field of peaceful biological activities**

BWC/CONF.II/13/II, p.6 (1986)

- Subsequent Review Conferences have urged and called upon all States Parties to submit annual CBM reports, as have the annual BWC resolutions adopted by the UNGA
- CBMs are the only formal tool under the BWC for promoting transparency and building confidence amongst States Parties
- CBMs are a valuable source of information on potential assistance and cooperation opportunities
- CBMs are neither declarations nor a substitute for verification – cannot be considered as a tool for assessing compliance

History of CBMs I

1986

The Second Review Conference agreed to introduce Confidence-Building Measures

1987

The CBMs (A – D) were then further elaborated at a meeting of scientific and technical experts from 31 March to 15 April 1987

1991

The Third Review Conference agreed to modify and considerably expand the CBMs (A - G)

2006

The Sixth Review Conference agreed on improvements to the mechanisms for submission and distribution of CBMs (electronic format, secure website etc) and mandated tasks to the new ISU

2011

The Seventh Review Conference adopted revised reporting forms (including modification of Form A part 1, deletion of parts of Form B, deletion of Form D and modification of Form E)

History of CBMs II

2012-13

States Parties addressed the topic of "How to enable fuller participation in the CBMs"

2018-20

States Parties addressed the topic "CBM submissions in terms of quantity and quality" in the framework of the Meeting of Experts on Strengthening National Implementation (MX3)

2018

A new CBM platform was introduced at the Meetings of Experts in August 2018

2022

The Ninth Review Conference agreed to address 'Measures on confidence-building and transparency' in the framework of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention

Confidence-Building Measures

A

Part 1: Exchange of data on **research centres and laboratories**

Part 2: Exchange of information on **national biological defence R&D**

B

Info on **outbreaks** of infectious diseases and similar occurrences, that seem to **deviate from the normal pattern**

C

Encouragement of **publication** of results and promotion of use of knowledge

E

Legislation, regulations and other measures

F

Declaration of **past activities** in offensive and/or defensive biological research and development programmes

G

Declaration of **vaccine production facilities**

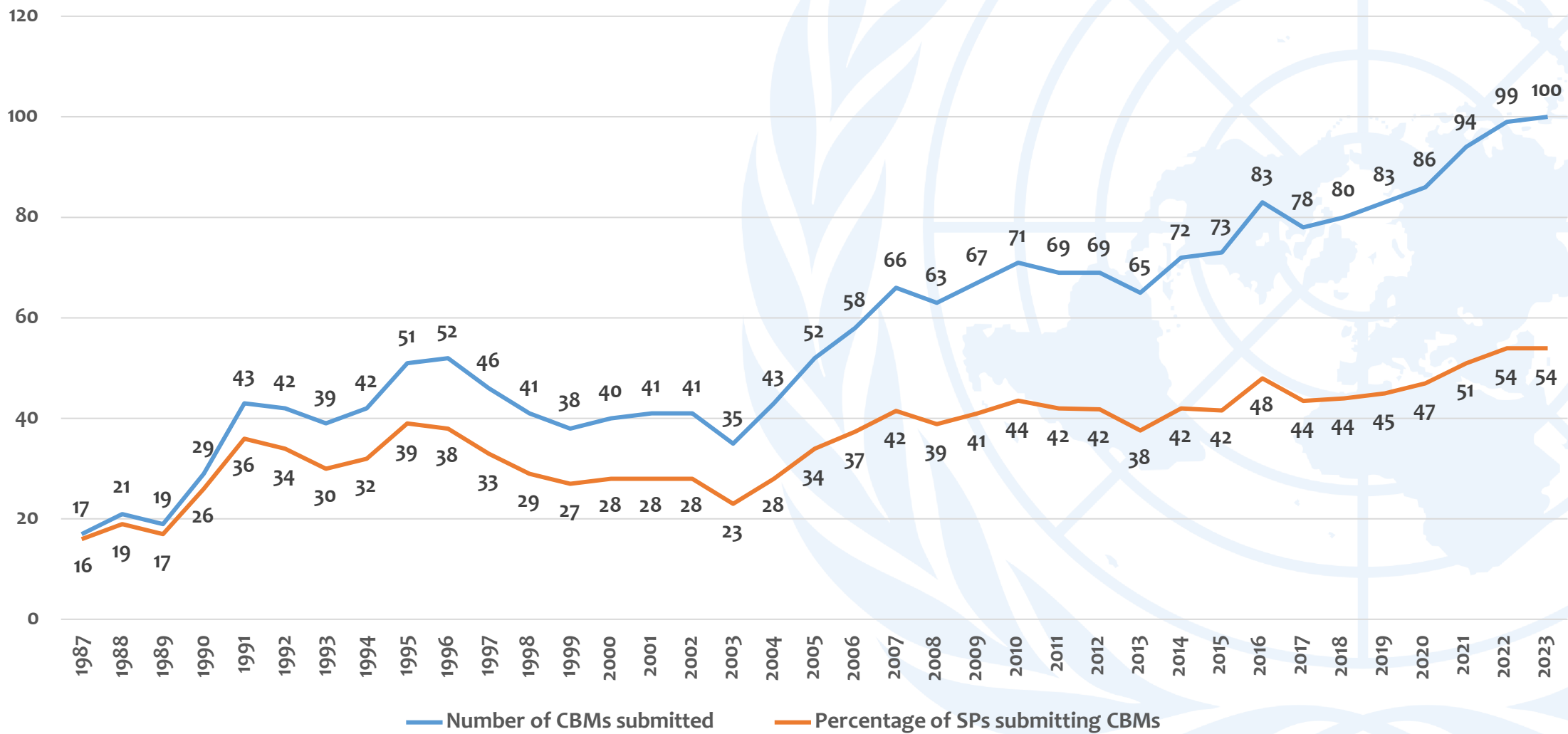
CBM Reports – Basic Facts

- Cover the activities during the previous calendar year
- Comprised of:
 - Summary Form (Form 0)
 - main body (six CBM Measures A-G)
- to be submitted by **15 April each year**:
 - Hardcopy/electronic document
 - Online (via eCBM platform: <https://bwc-ecbm.unog.ch/>)
 - In one of the six official UN languages
- Accessibility (two options):
 - restricted only to other States Parties
 - publicly available

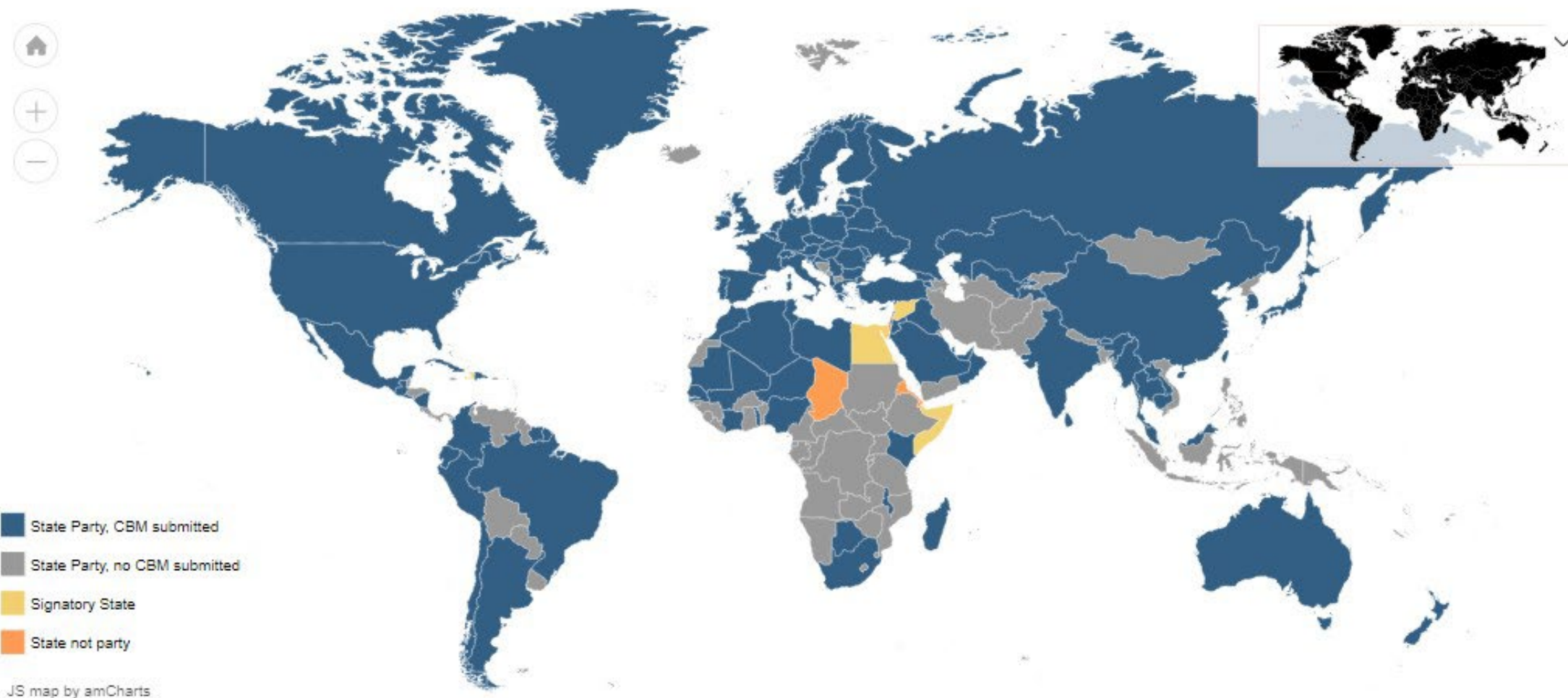


The image shows a 'Revised forms for the submission of the Confidence-Building Measures' document. The form is titled 'Declaration form on Nothing to Declare or Nothing New to Declare for use in the information exchange'. It includes a section for 'Nothing to declare' and a section for 'Nothing new to declare'. The form is divided into sections A, B, C, E, F, and G, each with a checkbox for 'Nothing to declare' and a checkbox for 'Nothing new to declare'. The form also includes a section for 'Year of last declaration (if nothing new to declare)'. At the bottom, there is a section for 'Date of ratification/acceptance to the Convention' and 'National point of contact'.

CBM Submissions 1987- 2023



CBM submissions in 2023



The depiction and use of boundaries, geographic names and related data shown on the map is not warranted to be error free nor does it necessarily imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

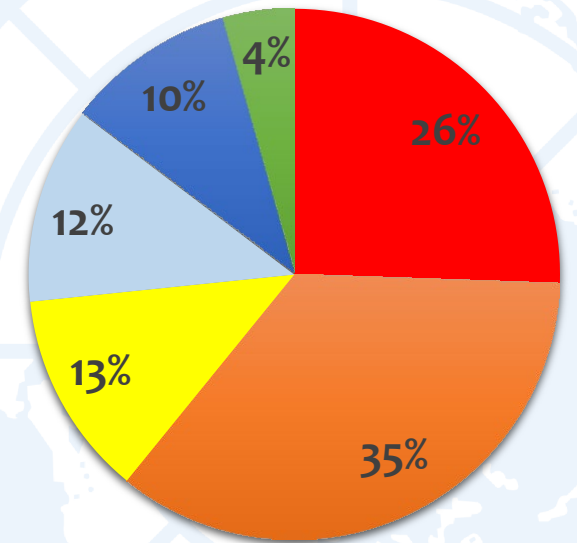
Total: 100 States Parties

ISU's CBM mandated tasks

- Receiving and distributing CBMs to/from States Parties
- Sending information notices to States Parties regarding their annual submissions
- Compiling and distributing data on CBMs and informing on participation at each MSP
- Developing and maintaining a secure website on CBMs to be accessible only to States Parties
- Serving as an information exchange point for assistance related to preparation of CBMs
- Facilitating activities to promote participation in the CBM process, as agreed by the States Parties

ISU observations on CBMs in terms of quantity

- 47 States Parties have never submitted a CBM report and several States Parties participate irregularly
- 9 States Parties have submitted CBM reports every year since 1987 (Canada, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom, USA)
- Slightly more than 50 % of all States Parties have exchanged CBMs in the last few years
- The majority of those States Parties which participate do so on a regular basis
- ISU has received little information from States Parties that have not participated regularly in the CBMs or have never participated, on the specific reasons for why they do not participate



- no submission
- 1-10 submissions
- 11-20 submissions
- 21-30 submissions
- 31-36 submissions
- 37 submissions (always)

ISU observations on CBM reporting

- ISU is not mandated to review or assess the validity of the information provided in the CBMs
- General observations regarding CBM submissions:
 - A few States Parties still make use of the old CBM forms or submit national forms
 - Different practices by States Parties on content submitted:
 - General statement (no CBM forms, no Form 0)
 - Submission of select CBM Measures (only new information)
 - All CBM Measures A-G
 - Information provided in Form 0 is sometimes incomplete, unclear or does not corroborate with information in the attached CBM forms
 - Part 1 of Form A includes two sub-questions (i) and (ii) which are not reflected in Form 0
 - Different understandings among States Parties on what constitutes a Declaration
 - Recent publication of 4th edition of WHO *Laboratory Biosafety Manual*

Benefits of CBMs

- Contribution to transparency and implementation of a decision from Review Conferences
- Provision of an annual overview of activities in the field of e.g. research, publications and international cooperation
- Provides a vehicle for national coordination activities
- Provides States Parties with an overview of relevant activities on their territory
- Provide important official information about relevant activities of other States Parties

Proposals from States Parties to enhance CBMs

- Working Papers submitted by States Parties on CBMs:
 - 10 working papers during the 2018-2020 intersessional programme
 - 5 working papers during the Ninth Review Conference (including its Preparatory Committee)
 - Several suggestions made regarding:
 - CBM Front Page (Form ‘o’)
 - Form A
 - Form E
 - Form G
- For further details see also [BWC/CONF.IX/PC/3](#)



Introduction of a new CBM platform in January 2024

- Upgrade of the CBM platform is necessary in view of compliance with UN ICT standards
- Voluntary contribution provided by the United Kingdom in 2023 to develop a new CBM platform that builds on features of the eCBM platform introduced in 2018
- Key features of the new platform:
 - Repository of all CBMs submitted since 1987
 - Website available in all six official UN languages
 - Software architecture in line with latest UN ICT security requirements
 - Enhanced website design in line with latest UN website standards
 - Enhanced statistics and graphics based on information from Form 0
 - Improved search capabilities on CBM reports for registered users/States Parties
 - Optional online CBM report submission (simplified upload of CBM report in pdf format)
 - Optional notification mechanism for users about new CBM submissions uploaded
 - Optional ‘Google translate’ feature for publicly available CBMs

Introduction of a new CBM platform in January 2024

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United Nations BWC CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES

REPORTS STATISTICS HOW TO SUBMIT DOCUMENTS CONTACT [SUBMIT REPORT](#) [USER NAME](#)

CBM Report Submissions

Year: 2023 (75 submissions)

This page lists those States Parties which have submitted Confidence-Building Measure reports in accordance with decisions of BWC Review Conferences. Where States Parties have consented to their CBMs being publicly available, these can be accessed by clicking the country name. To learn more about CBMs, visit the [BWC website](#).

Browse countries

SEARCH...

- Andorra submitted
- Afghanistan submitted
- Albania
- Armenia
- Argentina submitted
- Austria
- Australia submitted
- Andorra submitted
- Afghanistan submitted
- Albania

● State Party, CBM submitted ● State Party, CBM not submitted ● Signatory State

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United Nations CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES

Report submission

Steps to submission

- General information
- National point of Contact
- Accessibility
- CBM Forms
- Report Upload
- Overview

Accessibility

Public - Information accessible to all website users

Restricted - Information only accessible to BWC States Parties

← PREVIOUS STEP [SAVE DRAFT & LEAVE](#) [NEXT STEP](#)

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User profile

If any of your user information is incorrect, please use the contact form to ...

User information

First name: Samuel

Last name: Userus

Email Address: Samueluser@gmail.com

Access: editor

Account password [CHANGE PASSWORD](#)

- ✓ At least 12 characters long but 14 or more is better.
- ✓ A combination of uppercase letters, lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols.
- ✓ Significantly different from your previous passwords.

Current password: *****

New password: *****

Confirm new password: *****

[CANCEL](#) [SAVE](#)

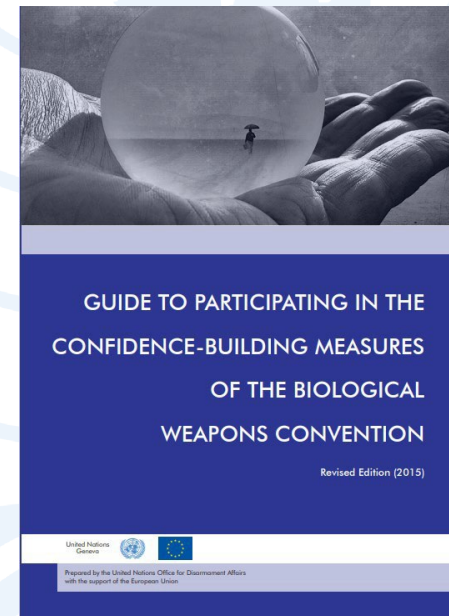
Email notification

- Notify me when a new report is submitted
- Send me monthly summary statistics

Assistance in the preparation of CBMs

BWC Cooperation and Assistance Database

- Eighth Review Conference: “The Conference urges those States Parties, in a position to do so, to provide technical assistance and support, through training or workshops for instance, to those States Parties requesting it to assist them to complete their annual CBM submissions.”
- Two CBM assistance offers recorded as of December 2023 under Article X (United Kingdom and United States of America)
- Four CBM assistance requests recorded as of December 2023 under Article X
- Experts from several States Parties (Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mali, Morocco, Philippines, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Switzerland, United Kingdom) have shared their national experiences in CBMs trainings (on-line or in-person) since 2020
- CBM Guide available in all six languages



CBM capacity-building activities held in 2023

- **Six workshops held with a considerable focus on CBMs**
 - Regional Workshop on BWC implementation for African NCPs, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (16-17 May)
 - Sub-regional BWC implementation workshop for South Asia, Kathmandu, Nepal (28-30 August)
 - Regional CBM workshop for States Parties in Southeast Asia, Bangkok, Thailand (10-11 September)
 - Regional Workshop on BWC implementation for Latin American and Caribbean NCPs, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (25-26 October)
 - National BWC workshop, Lome, Togo (9-10 October)
 - National BWC workshop, Cotonou, Benin (21-22 November)
- **197 participants from 59 States Parties familiarized on CBMs in 2023**
- **To be continued in 2024**



Conclusions

- CBM submissions by States Parties have increased over recent years
- 2020 - 2023 saw record numbers in submissions, which is also the result of increased outreach efforts by the ISU and UNODA on CBMs and a heightened interest in participation by States Parties
- Overall level of participation: slightly more than fifty percent of all States Parties having regularly exchanged CBMs
- ISU has received little information from States Parties that have not participated regularly in the CBMs or have never participated, on the specific reasons on why they do not participate
- Two States Parties (UK, US) have made CBM-related assistance offers under Article X
- ISU and UNODA stand ready to assist States Parties in the preparation and submissions of CBMs

For more information...



<https://disarmament.unoda.org/biological-weapons/>



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