

Ninth Review Conference 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

14 December 2022

English only

Geneva, 28 November-16 December 2022

Item 11 of the agenda

Consideration of issues identified in the review of the operation of the Convention as provided for in its Article XII and any possible consensus follow-up action

For the sake of all mankind

Submitted by Guyana

1. Guyana notes that the Ninth Review Conference of the State Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, and Stockpiling of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons. Their Destruction is taking place at a time when there are major flash points in the world, each of which can escalate into wider tension leading to expanding military activities. Experts analyzing this reality refer to and invoke the specter of World War III.
2. With the rapid advance of technology, including military technology, such an outcome could only mean the destruction of civilization, humankind, and life as we know it.
3. The use of or the threat of the use of Bacteriological weapons adds a new macabre dimension.
4. The unleashing of modern **biological weapons** could potentially destroy not only *Homo sapiens*, but also any form of life, including food crops, standing forests and livestock.
5. For the human population which may survive the initial and expanding devastation caused using bacteriological agents and toxins, starvation may be a major inheritance. Indeed, food insecurity will be the new norm.
6. Bacteriological agents have no respect for or recognition of national borders. Their destruction of food stocks will trigger a tsunami of struggles for food and food security and sustenance leading to widespread tension and more wars using existing conventional weapons and military technologies.
7. The use of or the threat of the use of Bacteriological agents and toxins as tools of war could, too, fuel mass migration from the areas under threat. Such a modern-day *Exodus* will come with all its disastrous consequences.
8. We already have seen and continue to see the dire consequences of unchecked mass migration in response to other threats, including genocide. The human rights abuses of the migrating populations based on ethnic and other considerations stands out. The abuse of the human rights of women and girls, and especially of children, is particularly repugnant.
9. Guyana reaffirms its endorsement of the Provisions of the Geneva Convention --- especially those which specifically protect the rights and wellbeing of civilian populations in the custody of, or under the control of a State Party in conditions of war or social disquiet. This primarily relates to the right to life, the right to medical attention, and the special protection of medical personnel delivering medical services to such hapless population groups. This group includes soldiers of every rank who are no longer able to wage war and are effectively vanquished and excluded from the war.
10. Guyana will join the international community in determining any such egregious abuses to be War Crimes, or even Core Crimes.



11. Guyana also reaffirms its continued commitment to support measures aimed to assist State Parties which have been exposed to a danger because of a violation of the Biological War Convention as is adumbrated in **Article VII** of the Convention. In this regard, Guyana finds particularly attractive and supports the recommendation of the Russian Federation to include mobile laboratories as a tool available to the Convention in the execution of its functions.

12. The recommendation of India for the creation of a *Data Base* resonates well with the Guyana Delegation and enjoys its full and unconditional support.

13. Guyana along with the entire international community witnessed our collective unpreparedness in managing the Public Health Threat of International Concern – the current ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic.

14. This collective international systemic weakness resulted in loss of tens of thousands of lives and severe economic disruption, the results of which affected disproportionately the poor and the powerless. This was a rude wake-up call. Further, it has been long recognized by PAHO/WHO that the post-Pandemic period will be blighted by “Long Covid,” fueled globally for decades to come by masses of COVID survivors living with complications of the disease. Most, especially those with pulmonary (lung) complications -- may be unable to work or to contribute to the respective National Economies.

15. In its efforts to achieve universality and awareness of the threat and its management, Programmes will be created and broadcast over the national “LEARNING CHANNEL.” This is a State-owned and operated public broadcaster created to fill gaps that the for-profit private media do not. The Ministry of Education, Guyana will be the lead agency in preparing and executing this activity.

THIS IS NOT THE ERA FOR WAR

16. Rather, it is the time for identifying and nurturing peaceful Change Agents. Guyana continues to recognize the untapped potential of its **YOUTH**. We will unleash those energies, unleash that potential. In recent years, the national Youth Parliament has reaffirmed its countrywide presence and its prominent role in the current wave of social activism. The Youth Parliament convenes in the said Parliament Complex that is used by the elected National Assembly/Parliament. The national Youth Parliament has an “OPPOSITION” and a “GOVERNMENT” side and operates like the Westminster model.

17. The “Youth Parliamentarians” in recent years have been benefiting from the mentorship of the Clerk of Parliament Office also referred to as the Clerk of the National Assembly. Under his guidance, successive groups of “Youth Parliamentarians” have been given exclusive access to, and use of the Library of Parliament. Under this guidance and easy access to valuable research archives and other material, the successive groups of “Youth Parliamentarians” have matured and grown in stature and confidence.

18. This emerging group of youthful Servant-Leaders have “**DEBATED**” topics of national and international importance. The Youth Parliamentary Agenda is to be expanded to include items on Geneva Convention. These young citizens will be active in public life in Guyana and its Diaspora for decades to come. Their familiarity with the GENEVA CONVENTION will be of long-lasting value. These “Youth Parliament” Sessions are open to the wider Public and are posted on the Parliament Website. These Youth Parliament Sessions (or “Sittings”) are open to the Public. They also attract the attention of their fellow classmates, other contemporaries, and their teachers -- all of whom participate by viewing the proceedings from the Public Gallery of the Parliament Buildings. Their familiarity, too, with the GENEVA CONVENTION will be of long-lasting value.

19. The process of creating vast numbers of “*Change Agents*” from among the multitude of school-age children and teenagers has for too long been overlooked. Guyana will continue to explore options to broaden the curricula by the inclusion of material on the Geneva Convention.

20. School Curricula and Examinations Question Banks should be adjusted to include material on the Geneva Convention, which will facilitate its universalization. Guyana invites the wider international community to take consideration of this option.

21. Guyana remains committed to, and supportive of the work of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, and Stockpiling of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons.
