

**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**

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Geneva, 22-25 November 2021

**Meeting of Experts on Cooperation and Assistance,
with a Particular Focus on Strengthening Cooperation
and Assistance under Article X**

Geneva, 30-31 August 2021

Item 11 of the Agenda

**Adoption of the factual report reflecting the deliberations of the meeting,
including possible outcomes**

**Report of the 2020 Meeting of Experts on cooperation and
assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening
cooperation and assistance under Article X¹**

I. Introduction

1. At the Eighth 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 ([BWC/CONF.VIII/4](#)), States Parties decided to hold annual meetings and that the first such meeting, in December 2017, would seek to make progress on issues of substance and process for the period before the next Review Conference, with a view to reaching consensus on an intersessional process.
2. At the Meeting of States Parties in December 2017, States Parties reached consensus on the following:
 - “(a) Reaffirming previous intersessional programmes from 2003-2015 and retaining the previous structures: annual Meetings of States Parties preceded by annual Meetings of Experts.
 - (b) The purpose of the intersessional programme is to discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action on those issues identified for inclusion in the intersessional programme.
 - (c) Recognizing the need to balance an ambition to improve the intersessional programme within the constraints – both financial and human resources – facing States Parties, twelve days are allocated to the intersessional programme each year from 2018- 2020. The work in the intersessional period will be guided by the aim of strengthening the implementation of all articles of the Convention in order to better respond to current challenges. The Meetings of Experts for eight days will be held back to back and at least three months before the annual Meetings of States Parties of four days each. Maximum use would be made of the Sponsorship Programme

¹ Any entry listed in this document does not imply the expression of any opinion regarding, and is without prejudice to, the legal status of any country or territory or of its authorities.



funded by voluntary contributions in order to facilitate participation of developing States Parties in the meetings of the intersessional programme.

(d) The meetings of the MSP will be chaired by a representative of the EEG in 2018, a representative of the Western Group in 2019 and a representative of the Group of Non-Aligned Movement and Other States in 2020. The annual Chair will be supported by two annual vice-chairs, one from each of the other two regional groups. In addition to the reports of the Meetings of Experts, the Meetings of States Parties will consider the annual reports of the ISU and progress on universality. The Meetings of Experts will be chaired in 2018 by [the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States Parties to the BWC] (MX 1 and MX 2) and the Western Group (MX 3 and MX4), in 2019 by EEG (MX1 and MX 2) and NAM (MX 3 and MX 4), and in 2020 by Western Group (MX 1 and MX 2) and by EEG (MX 3 and MX 4); MX 5 will be chaired by the regional group chairing the MSP.

	<i>MSP</i>	<i>MX 1</i>	<i>MX 2</i>	<i>MX 3</i>	<i>MX 4</i>	<i>MX 5</i>
2018	EEG	NAM	NAM	WG	WG	EEG
2019	WG	EEG	EEG	NAM	NAM	WG
2020	NAM	WG	WG	EEG	EEG	NAM

All meetings will be subject mutatis mutandis to the rules of procedure of the Eighth Review Conference.

(e) The Meetings of Experts would be open-ended and will consider the following topics:

MX.1 (2 days): Cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X:

- Consideration of the reports of the States Parties on their full and comprehensive implementation of all provisions of Article X;
- Review of the report by the ISU on the operation of the assistance and cooperation database established by the Seventh Review Conference and renewed by the Eighth Review Conference and consideration of its further operationalization, including measures to further strengthen the operation of the database, including in the light of BWC/MSP/2017/4;
- Identification of challenges and obstacles to developing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in the biological sciences and technology, including equipment and material, for peaceful purposes to their full potential, and possible ways and means of overcoming these;
- Development of guidelines and procedures for mobilizing resources, including financial resources on a voluntary basis to address gaps and needs;
- Facilitation of education, training, exchange and twinning programs and other means of developing human resources in biological sciences and technology related to implementation of the Convention, particularly in developing countries;
- Promotion of capacity building, through international cooperation, in biosafety and biosecurity and for detecting, reporting and responding to outbreaks of infectious disease or biological weapons attacks, including in the areas of preparedness, response, and crisis management and mitigation;
- Collaboration with international organizations and networks related to combating infectious diseases at all levels, as well as regional and sub-regional cooperation to promote implementation of all articles of the Convention.

[...]

(f) Each Meeting of Experts will prepare for the consideration of the annual Meeting of States Parties a factual report reflecting its deliberations, including possible outcomes. All meetings, both of Experts and of States Parties will reach any conclusions or results by consensus. The Meeting of States Parties will be responsible for managing the intersessional programme, including taking necessary measures with respect to budgetary and financial matters by consensus with a view to ensuring the proper implementation of the intersessional programme. The Ninth Review Conference will consider the work and outcomes it receives from the Meetings of States Parties and the Meetings of Experts and decide by consensus on any inputs from the intersessional programme and on any further action.”

3. By resolution 75/88, adopted without a vote on 7 December 2020, the General Assembly, *inter alia*, requested the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the depositary Governments of the Convention and to continue to provide such services as may be required for the conduct and the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the review conferences.

II. Organization of the Meeting of Experts

4. In accordance with the decisions of the Eighth Review Conference, the 2017 Meeting of States Parties and the 2019 Meeting of States Parties, the Meeting of Experts was originally scheduled to take place from 25 to 26 August 2020. However, the Meeting was postponed several times due to the COVID-19 pandemic and, according to the agreement by States Parties by written silence procedure², it was instead convened at the Palais des Nations in Geneva from 30 to 31 August 2021, chaired by Mr. Kimmo Laukkanen, Deputy Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

5. On 30 August 2021, the Meeting of Experts adopted its agenda ([BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/1](#)) as proposed by the Chair.

6. Following a suggestion by the Chair, the Meeting of Experts adopted as its rules of procedure, *mutatis mutandis*, the rules of procedure of the Eighth Review Conference, as contained in document [BWC/CONF.VIII/2](#).

7. Mr. Daniel Feakes, Chief, Implementation Support Unit, Office for Disarmament Affairs, Geneva, served as Secretary of the Meeting of Experts. Mr. Hermann Lampalzer, Political Affairs Officer, Implementation Support Unit, served as Deputy Secretary and Ms. Ngoc Phuong van der Blij, Political Affairs Officer, also served in the secretariat.

III. Participation at the Meeting of Experts

8. Ninety delegations participated in the Meeting of Experts as follows: Algeria; Angola; Argentina; Australia; Austria; Azerbaijan; Barbados; Belarus; Belgium; Botswana; Brazil; Brunei Darussalam; Bulgaria; Canada; Chile; China; Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; Czech Republic; Democratic Republic of Congo; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Estonia; Finland; France; Georgia; Germany; Ghana; Guyana; Holy See; Hungary; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Iraq; Ireland; Italy; Japan; Kazakhstan; Kenya; Kuwait; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Lebanon; Libya; Lithuania; Madagascar; Malaysia; Mauritius; Mexico; Montenegro; Myanmar; Nepal; Netherlands; Nigeria; North Macedonia; Norway; Pakistan; Panama; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Qatar; Republic of Korea; Romania; Russian Federation; Saudi Arabia; Senegal; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; South Africa; Spain; Sri Lanka; Sudan; Sweden; Switzerland; Thailand; Togo; Turkey; Ukraine; United Arab Emirates; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern

² See the letters from the Chair of the 2020 Meeting of States Parties dated 28 July 2020, 23 November 2020 and 9 February 2021.

Ireland; United States of America; Uruguay; Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of); Yemen; Zambia; and Zimbabwe.

9. In addition, one State that had signed the Convention but had not yet ratified it participated in the Meeting of Experts without taking part in the making of decisions, as provided for in rule 44, paragraph 1 of the rules of procedure: Egypt.

10. Two States, Chad and Israel, neither parties nor signatories to the Convention, participated in the Meeting of Experts as observers, in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 2.

11. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism attended the Meeting of Experts in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 3.

12. The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, the Caribbean Public Health Agency, the European Union, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Organization of American States and the World Health Organization were granted observer status to participate in the Meeting of Experts in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 4.

13. In addition, at the invitation of the Chair, in recognition of the special nature of the topics under consideration at this meeting and without creating a precedent, an independent expert participated in informal exchanges in the open sessions as a Guest of the Meeting of Experts: Ms. Mayra Ameneiros, alumna of the 2021 “Youth for Biosecurity” workshop.

14. Eleven non-governmental organizations and research institutes attended the Meeting of Experts under rule 44, paragraph 5.

15. A list of all participants in the Meeting of Experts is contained in document [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/INF.1](#).

IV. Work of the Meeting of Experts

16. In accordance with the provisional agenda ([BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/1](#)) and an annotated programme of work prepared by the Chair, the Meeting of Experts had substantive discussions on the issues allocated by the 2017 Meeting of States Parties.

17. Under agenda item 4 (“Consideration of the reports of the States Parties on their full and comprehensive implementation of all provisions of Article X”), the Implementation Support Unit provided a brief update and the United States of America introduced a working paper ([BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/WP.1](#)). There then followed an interactive discussion on the agenda item in which the following States Parties participated: Canada; Georgia; Germany; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Kenya; Japan; Mexico; Qatar; Republic of Korea; and Russian Federation. The European Union made a statement. Various views were expressed during the consideration of this agenda item.

18. Under agenda item 5 (“Review of the report by the ISU on the operation of the assistance and cooperation database established by the Seventh Review Conference and renewed by the Eighth Review Conference and consideration of its further operationalization, including measures to further strengthen the operation of the database, including in the light of BWC/MSP/2017/4”), the Implementation Support Unit gave a brief update on the Cooperation and Assistance database. There then followed an interactive discussion on the agenda item in which the following States Parties participated: Brazil; China; France; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Philippines; Switzerland; United States of America; and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). The European Union made a statement. Various views were expressed during the consideration of this agenda item.

19. Under agenda item 6 (“Identification of challenges and obstacles to developing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in the biological sciences and technology, including equipment and material, for peaceful purposes to their full potential, and possible ways and means of overcoming these”), the United Kingdom of Great Britain

and Northern Ireland, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Cuba introduced working papers ([BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/WP.2](#), [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/WP.6](#) and [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/WP.7](#) respectively). There then followed an interactive discussion on the agenda item in which the following States Parties participated: China; Cuba; Germany; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Pakistan; Philippines; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United States of America; and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Various views were expressed during the consideration of this agenda item.

20. Under agenda item 7 (“Development of guidelines and procedures for mobilizing resources, including financial resources on a voluntary basis to address gaps and needs”), the Implementation Support Unit provided a brief update on the BWC Sponsorship Programme and the United States of America and Germany introduced working papers ([BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/WP.4](#) and [BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/WP.5](#) respectively). There then followed an interactive discussion on the agenda item in which the following States Parties participated: Brazil; India; Kenya, Philippines; and United Arab Emirates. Various views were expressed during the consideration of this agenda item.

21. Under agenda item 8 (“Facilitation of education, training, exchange and twinning programmes and other means of developing human resources in biological sciences and technology related to implementation of the Convention, particularly in developing countries”), Ms. Mayra Ameneiros, alumna of the 2021 “Youth for Biosecurity” workshop made a presentation as a Guest of the Meeting. There then followed an interactive discussion on the agenda item in which the following States Parties participated: Brazil; Italy; Japan; Libya; Mexico; Norway; Republic of Korea; Switzerland; and United States of America. Various views were expressed during the consideration of this agenda item.

22. Under agenda item 9 (“Promotion of capacity building, through international cooperation, in biosafety and biosecurity and for detecting, reporting and responding to outbreaks of infectious disease or biological weapons attacks, including in the areas of preparedness, response, and crisis management and mitigation”), France introduced a working paper ([BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/WP.3](#)). There then followed an interactive discussion on the agenda item in which the following States Parties participated: Brazil; Canada; Cuba; France; Germany; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Switzerland; Ukraine; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on behalf of the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction; United States of America; and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism made a technical presentation and the European Union made a statement. Various views were expressed during the consideration of this agenda item.

23. Under agenda item 10 (“Collaboration with international organizations and networks related to combating infectious diseases at all levels, as well as regional and sub-regional cooperation to promote implementation of all articles of the Convention”), the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the Caribbean Public Health Agency gave technical presentations. There then followed an interactive discussion on the agenda item in which the following States Parties participated: Mexico; Russian Federation; Ukraine; and United States of America. The European Union made a statement. Various views were expressed during the consideration of this agenda item.

24. In the course of its work, the Meeting of Experts was able to draw on a number of working papers submitted by States Parties, as well as on statements and presentations made by States Parties, international organizations and the Guest of the Meeting, which were circulated in the Meeting.

25. The Chair, under his own responsibility and initiative, has prepared a paper listing considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals drawn from the presentations, statements, working papers and interventions on the agenda items under discussion at the Meeting. The Meeting of Experts noted that this paper had not been agreed and had no status. It was the Chair’s view that the paper could assist delegations in their preparations for the Meeting of States Parties in November 2021 and also in their consideration of how best to “discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action on” the topics in accordance with the consensus reached at the 2017 Meeting of

States Parties. The paper prepared by the Chair, in consultation with States Parties, is attached as Annex I to this report.

V. Documentation

26. A list of official documents of the Meeting of Experts, including the working papers submitted by States Parties, is contained in Annex II to this report. All documents on this list are available on the BWC website at <https://meetings.unoda.org/section/bwc-mx-2020-mx1-documents/> and through the United Nations Official Document System (ODS), at <http://documents.un.org>.

VI. Conclusion of the Meeting of Experts

27. At its closing meeting on 31 August 2021, the Meeting of Experts adopted its report by consensus, as orally amended, as contained in document BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/CRP.1, to be issued as document BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/2.

Annex I

Summary report

Submitted by the Chairperson of the 2020 Meeting of Experts on Cooperation and Assistance, with a Particular Focus on Strengthening Cooperation and Assistance under Article X

1. The Chairperson, under his own responsibility and initiative, has prepared this paper which lists considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals drawn from the presentations, statements, working papers and interventions on the agenda items under discussion at the Meeting held from 30 to 31 August 2021. The Meeting of Experts noted that this paper had not been agreed and had no status. It was the Chairperson's view, however, that this paper could assist delegations in their preparations for the Meeting of States Parties in November 2021 and also in their consideration of how best to "discuss and promote common understanding and effective action on" the topics in accordance with the consensus reached at the 2017 Meeting of States Parties.

2. The Chairperson would like to express his gratitude to delegations for their active participation in the Meeting, particularly for the various working papers that were submitted and which, together with oral statements and the constructive debate, as well as the interventions by relevant international organizations, have served as the basis for this summary report. As expressed by many delegations during the Meeting, the Chairperson re-emphasized its importance, as the third and final one in the current intersessional period. The Meeting therefore acts as a bridge between the Meetings in 2018 and 2019 and the Ninth Review Conference in 2022. The procedural report of the Meeting details which delegations spoke under the different agenda items, and which delegations introduced working papers, so such information will not be repeated in this summary report.

3. The in-depth and substantive discussions and the large number of proposals indicated the clear interest of delegations in making progress on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X. The following sections summarize and synthesize the substantive discussions under agenda items 4 to 10.

Agenda item 4 - Consideration of the reports of the States Parties on their full and comprehensive implementation of all provisions of Article X

4. Following the update provided by the Implementation Support Unit (ISU), which noted that only one national Article X report had been submitted in 2020 and none so far in 2021, States Parties emphasized the usefulness of the reports and discussed how voluntary reporting could be further encouraged and facilitated with a view to strengthening the implementation of Article X. One State Party submitted a working paper containing its report on the implementation of Article X and several other States Parties took the opportunity to orally present a wide range of activities and programmes relevant to the implementation of Article X. A number of States Parties referred to assistance that they had provided to other countries to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. Some States Parties stressed the importance of submitting reports on how Article X obligations are being implemented. It was also stated that the reports will provide a more complete picture of the implementation of Article X and will permit the international community to better prepare for future outbreaks of infectious diseases, regardless of origin.

6. While reporting on national activities relevant to Article X, many States Parties acknowledged the value of sustainable and long-term partnerships for cooperation and assistance, such as capacity-building activities. National ownership, as well as clear

national action plans were also highlighted as important components of a successful initiative.

7. Some States Parties recommended the strengthening of intellectual property rights regulations, noting that robust legal regimes could facilitate and promote foreign investment. Furthermore, the idea of establishing a trust fund was mentioned by one State Party, in order to improve the effective implementation of Article X.

8. Many States Parties acknowledged that the current COVID-19 pandemic had heavily impacted the implementation of Article X, considering that cooperation and assistance are crucial elements during the crisis. Some States Parties felt that the pandemic showed the weakness in implementation of Article X and underlined the need to focus on strengthening international cooperation and assistance to ensure all States Parties, particularly developing States, have access to equipment, materials and scientific and technological information relevant to the Convention. Others believed that the pandemic had reaffirmed the vital role of science, technology, and innovation in providing solutions to mitigate against pandemics and disasters and instigated the need to transit to more sustainable, equitable and resilient societies.

9. Due to the pandemic, most of the assistance received was in the form of emergency response, medical and health care supplies, and vaccinations. Some delegations encouraged local and regional ownership to ensure long-term sustainability of activities, stronger partnerships between donors and beneficiary States, further coordination among donors, and increased South-South cooperation. A number of recipient States shared their experiences of how assistance received helped to build their national capacities.

10. Some other States Parties discussed obstacles that could hamper a successful and universal implementation of Article X and described difficulties and challenges they faced in receiving assistance and humanitarian and medical supplies due to unilateral restrictions imposed by other States Parties.

Agenda item 5 - Review of the report by the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) on the operation of the assistance and cooperation database established by the Seventh Review Conference and renewed by the Eighth Review Conference and consideration of its further operationalization, including measures to further strengthen the operation of the database, including in the light of BWC/MSP/2017/4

11. Following a brief update by the Implementation Support Unit (ISU), in which the Unit described the update of the Database and its current status, many States Parties reiterated the crucial role of the ISU in facilitating the implementation of Article X and reemphasized the importance of the Assistance and Cooperation Database, as one of the main tools in support of the implementation of Article X. They therefore encouraged all States Parties to make full use of the Database.

12. States Parties welcomed the increasing number of offers and requests listed in the Database, while reiterating the need to further harness the potential of the Database as the BWC's online cooperation platform for implementing Article X.

13. Many States Parties welcomed current and planned voluntary contributions made by some States Parties in 2021 in support of the Database specifically or Article X in general. They also welcome future projects, activities and studies announced by the ISU, made possible by the voluntary contributions received.

14. States Parties noted that the Database is currently used by only a small proportion of States Parties, from both the offering and requesting sides. Furthermore, States Parties underlined the need to continue to enhance the functionality, visibility, effectiveness and content of the Database, suggesting that this is critical to strengthening cooperation and

assistance under Article X. Further in-depth discussions were suggested by many States Parties.

15. Looking forward, several States Parties underlined the lack of capacity within the ISU to undertake in-depth work on the Database, and some therefore reiterated an earlier proposal to recruit a capacity-building officer. Some delegations linked the creation of such a post to the establishment of a Cooperation Committee, while other delegations sought further clarification on this linkage.

16. It was highlighted that offers of assistance outnumbered requests, and that more matching activities had taken place but were not reported by States Parties, and therefore not reflected in the Database. The ISU noted that more assistance activities are underway than are reported in the Database and also informed States Parties that several requests have been partially met, but that it was challenging to properly reflect such partial matches in the Database. It was pointed out that many States Parties opt for informal channels to request for assistance and cooperation activities rather than formally addressing these issues via the Database.

17. Some States Parties made reference to proposals under discussion in other Meetings of Experts for additional databases and underlined that potential overlaps between the existing Cooperation and Assistance Database and future ones should be considered.

Agenda item 6 - Identification of challenges and obstacles to developing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in the biological sciences and technology, including equipment and material, for peaceful purposes to their full potential, and possible ways and means of overcoming these

18. Three working papers were introduced by three States Parties under this item. Several other delegations took the opportunity to intervene and orally present a wide range of activities and programmes relevant to developing international cooperation, assistance and exchange.

19. States Parties shared views on challenges and obstacles to undertaking and developing cooperation and assistance, including in the fields of biotechnology, genetic engineering, microbiology and other related areas between developed and developing countries. There was a call to balance the relationship between non-proliferation and peaceful uses of technologies, thereby enhancing international cooperation.

20. In considering what constitutes assistance and cooperation under Article X, it was noted that there is no agreed definition. One State Party recalled the negotiating history of Article X and subsequent implementation practice. Some States Parties argued that a narrow definition of the scope of activities relevant to Article X could result in a much more limited list of topics deemed to fall under this Article. Such an outcome would likely impede rather than facilitate further work on this Article in the context of a future intersessional programme. Therefore, any implementation activities reported (such as detection, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of infectious diseases, or on the use of microorganisms for bioremediation of contaminated soils) that are conducted in a way that promotes economic and technological development in States Parties and increases international cooperation on the peaceful uses of biology should be considered as relevant.

21. Some other States Parties suggested that the lack of an institutional mechanism to facilitate the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article X posed an important challenge to developing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in the biological sciences and technology. They therefore reiterated earlier proposals for the development of an effective institutional mechanism comprising an Article X compliance mechanism and a Cooperation Committee. Pending the establishment of such a mechanism, it was argued that States Parties should develop an action plan for implementation of Article X.

22. Some States Parties took the view that Article X also lacks a mechanism to address unilateral coercive measures. Such measures were seen by some States Parties as being in breach of the Article X undertaking to implement the Convention in a manner not to hamper the economic and technological development of other States Parties. Some States Parties reported that such measures were impacting negatively on their populations. Some States Parties therefore reiterated earlier proposals to develop a multilaterally negotiated procedure within the BWC to settle such disputes. Other States Parties noted that they maintain the right to pursue their foreign policy and national security interests and stated that they try to mitigate secondary health effects and have exemptions for public health needs for medicines and vaccines.

23. Some States Parties reiterated the existence of multilateral export control regimes which impose restrictions on trade (including in drugs, medicines, vaccines, diagnostics, biological agents, equipment and /or materials for peaceful purposes). They underlined that the provisions of Articles III and IV should not be used to impose such restrictions and/or limitations. They reiterated the proposal to establish a non-proliferation export control and international cooperation regime under the framework of the Convention. However, other States Parties expressed the view that obligations under Article X remain unaffected by multilateral export control regimes and argued that such regimes support the implementation of Article III and that very few transfer requests are actually denied.

Agenda item 7 - Development of guidelines and procedures for mobilizing resources, including financial resources on a voluntary basis to address gaps and needs

24. States Parties reiterated the need to explore new approaches and instruments to effectively address gaps and needs in cooperation and assistance under Article X, in a sustainable manner, through resource mobilization guidelines. The ISU provided a brief update on the BWC Sponsorship Programme. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic only a limited number of experts from five developing States Parties could be supported to participate in the Meetings of Experts, through a voluntary contribution from the European Union. The United States of America bilaterally supported the participation of another State Party. States Parties reiterated the value of the BWC Sponsorship Programme as an opportunity to allow developing States Parties to actively participate in the annual meetings of the BWC.

25. Two working papers were introduced under this agenda item. States Parties acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic brought to light the vulnerabilities faced by the international community vis-à-vis biological risks. However, it was noted that the pandemic had also provided an opportunity to BWC States Parties to strengthen international preventive security networks that are conducive both to the goals of the Convention and to strengthening international resilience against future pandemics. States Parties noted that the pandemic has made a compelling case for increased collaboration and assistance among BWC States Parties, through capacity building, infrastructure support and provision of equipment. It was stated that this is not only vital for saving lives but also assists in managing the spread of the pandemic.

26. As a means of sharing best practices, many States Parties described how they mobilized resources and provided assistance to other States Parties during the pandemic. Many States Parties emphasized that fighting a global pandemic of unprecedented scale required multilateral action. Activities included: encouraging and pursuing multilateral approaches for immediate emergency supplies, confronting and containing the pandemic through the development and supply of vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics, as well as building international capacities for stronger resilience against future pandemics and biological threats.

27. Some activities and efforts were described as critical in minimizing the impact of the pandemic, such as accelerating widespread and equitable access to and delivery of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccinations; seeking to reduce morbidity and mortality from COVID-19 and mitigate transmission; and strengthening health systems to prevent, detect, and

respond to COVID-19 and future pandemic threats. Efforts in minimizing household shocks, building resilience, and bolstering economies and other critical systems under stress due to COVID-19 to enable recovery, were also described. Partnering with other countries and international organizations and networks to strengthen the global health security architecture, as well as increasing sustainable health security financing was also highlighted as important components.

28. Many States Parties highlighted the importance of multilateral efforts to accelerate the development and production of vaccines and to globally provide equitable access to vaccines. In this regard, the COVAX facility was underlined by many as an important pillar of the distribution process.

29. In light of the pandemic, the World Health Organization's leading and coordinating role in confronting current and future pandemics was emphasized by many States Parties, as well as the international community's efforts to strengthen its preparedness for and response to health emergencies.

30. Some States Parties underlined the important role played by individuals, industry, foundations, universities, and other non-governmental organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic. They suggested that partnerships with these entities were essential to facilitating the fullest possible exchange of scientific and technological information.

31. Some States Parties were of the view that the recent pandemic underscored the need for new approaches to mobilize resources and argued that innovative public-private partnerships such as the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) should be further strengthened. It was added that such initiatives provide useful templates for collaboration between developing and developed States and with international organizations, NGOs, academia and industry.

32. The idea of setting up a voluntary trust fund under Article X was reiterated, as well as the idea of creating a position of Cooperation and Assistance Officer within the ISU.

Agenda item 8 - Facilitation of education, training, exchange and twinning programmes and other means of developing human resources in biological sciences and technology related to implementation of the Convention, particularly in developing countries

33. A Guest of the Meeting briefed on a "Youth for Biosecurity" initiative which aimed to foster biosecurity networks among young life scientists from the Global South. Many of the participants in the initiative were following the Meeting of Experts remotely. Several States Parties introduced national and regional platforms for education, training, exchange and scholarship initiatives to support human resource development in the field of biological sciences. The value of these activities was reiterated and further encouraged by States Parties.

34. Many States Parties recognized the value of numerous programmes involving young scientists and academia between and among developing and developed States. States Parties expressed appreciation for the efforts by young scientists on the issues of disarmament and security. They added that such initiatives should be further encouraged to promote regional networks of young scientists, especially in the Global South.

35. Fostering assistance and cooperation among young scientists and biosecurity leaders, facilitating capacity building programmes for developing countries in biosafety and biosecurity, and engaging global networks of biosecurity professionals were key objectives that should be further promoted among those programmes.

Agenda item 9 - Promotion of capacity building, through international cooperation, in biosafety and biosecurity and for detecting, reporting and responding to outbreaks of infectious disease or biological weapons attacks, including in the areas of preparedness, response, and crisis management and mitigation

36. States Parties considered the broad range of national and international activities that are already conducted within the framework of Article X. Some States Parties reiterated the importance of Article X and its strong intersection with other Articles of the Convention, including Article IV and Article VII.

37. One delegation introduced a working paper proposing to establish a potential future online international, interactive, and ad-hoc platform dedicated to biosafety and biosecurity to be used by practitioners and institutions. The platform would include: a repository of documents, including relevant legislation, and scientific publications; training modules; and an exchange forum for practitioners. The ISU would play an administrative role for the platform.

38. Several States Parties welcomed the initiative and efforts undertaken by the submitting State Party and recognized the potential value of the platform. Several States Parties sought clarification on various aspects of the proposal and a lengthy discussion on the value of such a platform ensued. During the discussion, several States Parties stressed the need to avoid duplication or overlaps with existing national or international tools or databases.

39. Some delegations noted the limited resources and capacity of the ISU to fulfil its current mandate and expressed concern that assigning it with additional tasks related to the platform's administration might pose challenges, unless States Parties agreed to also provide additional resources to the ISU.

40. States Parties, including the submitting State Party, noted that further discussions about the platform will be required, including its concept, content, administration, and cost estimates. It was noted that further discussions on the definition of biosafety and biosecurity will be required as well.

41. Following a technical presentation, States Parties discussed activities and strategies to strengthen the capacities of States, international organizations and UN entities to prevent, prepare for and respond to terrorist attacks involving Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) or Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) materials.

42. It was noted that strategies to counter bioterrorism could include 4 phases: 1) Studies on the threat of CBRN terrorism with relevant experts from security and law enforcement areas, such as INTERPOL; 2) Prevention, by establishing a biosecurity strategy, including training curricula, disrupting clandestine labs or promoting a biosecurity culture for scientists; 3) Response, with outbreak, containment, or biological countermeasures; and 4) ensuring effective interagency interoperability and coordinated communication in case of chemical and/or biological attacks.

43. Sustained cooperation and assistance were highlighted as an important element of facing new transnational challenges in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. In that perspective, synergies between Article VII and Article X of the BWC were underlined by many States Parties.

44. In light of the current pandemic, States Parties reiterated that building health system capacity and resilience through workforce development is a crucial element to disease outbreaks management, as health professionals are the first line of defence when it comes to detecting and fighting infectious diseases. A robust and resilient health system will be better prepared to manage outbreaks regardless of their origin, whilst at the same time continuing to maintain core healthcare functions.

45. States Parties reiterated that, in crisis situations challenges in developing States included: the limited time available for action; the high level of patient load; as well as the lack of access to the latest medical information.

46. States Parties considered initiatives to strengthen youth engagement and South-South cooperation, which included education programmes, science and technology forums, awareness-raising through trainings, and harmonisation of national legislation with international standards. Some States Parties noted that synergy effects should be used, through alignment of transnational initiatives, to avoid duplications. The Meeting was informed about a new initiative to identify and implement activities in Africa to build sustainable health-security capacity, increase the membership and strengthen the implementation of the BWC and achieve the shared objective of mitigating biological threats.

Agenda item 10 - Collaboration with international organizations and networks related to combating infectious diseases at all levels, as well as regional and sub-regional cooperation to promote implementation of all articles of the Convention

47. States Parties reiterated that relevant international and regional organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), play an important role in disease surveillance, prevention, detection and response and that there is merit in continuing coordination and cooperation with them to implement Article X in accordance with their respective mandates.

48. Following two technical presentations delivered by regional public health organizations, States Parties discussed regional cooperation, shared best practices and challenges.

49. States Parties recognized the added value of regional organisations in supporting and coordinating cooperation and assistance activities and initiatives relevant to Article X, as well as promoting awareness-raising about the Convention. Those regional organisations are building Member States' capacity to prevent diseases, by promoting health and wellness through leadership, partnership, and innovations in public health.

50. It was noted by some States Parties that regional health security was based on biosecurity and biosafety as the main pillars and built on four components: 1) a solid national framework and effective mechanism; 2) an expanded regional cadre of biorisk management experts; 3) Sustainable biological risk management and best practice using common educational materials; and 4) regional mechanism for transport of infectious substances.

51. In order to strengthen the biosecurity and biosafety systems of States Parties, a list of critical regulations have been identified by those regional organisations, where compliance should be further reinforced, including the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005), the BWC, United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the Global Health Security Agenda. While discussing challenges faced by those regional organizations, in supporting the development of individual States Parties' legal frameworks, harmonization of regional differences and specific needs was presented as one of the obstacles, especially in developing countries. Furthermore, biosafety and biosecurity are not at the forefront of priorities identified by public health workers, and awareness raising is often needed to address this problem. Finally, the lack of resources remains one of the main challenges encountered by developing States, when establishing a solid legislative framework.

52. Some States Parties raised the need to establish effective global surveillance systems and fund pandemic and health emergency prediction measures. It was stressed that existing entities need to be made fit for purpose before aiming to establish additional entities. A few

delegations considered continuous, predictable and sustained resourcing over time as most important.

Annex II

List of documents of the 2020 Meeting of Experts on Cooperation and Assistance, with a Particular Focus on Strengthening Cooperation and Assistance under Article X

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/1	Provisional Agenda for the 2020 Meeting of Experts on Cooperation and Assistance, with a Particular Focus on Strengthening Cooperation and Assistance under Article X - Submitted by the Chairperson
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/2	Report of the 2020 Meeting of Experts on Cooperation and Assistance, with a Particular Focus on Strengthening Cooperation and Assistance under Article X
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/CRP.1 English only	Draft report of the 2020 Meeting of Experts on Cooperation and Assistance, with a Particular Focus on Strengthening Cooperation and Assistance under Article X - Submitted by the Chairperson
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/MISC.1 English/French/Spanish only	Provisional list of participants
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/INF.1 English/French/Spanish only	List of participants
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/WP.1 English only	Report on Implementation of Article X of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention – Submitted by the United States of America
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/WP.2 English only	What constitutes assistance and cooperation under Article X? – Submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/WP.3 English and French only	Proposal for establishment of an international platform dedicated to biosecurity and biosafety: SecBio – Submitted by France
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/WP.4 English only	Contributions to the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic – Submitted by the United States of America
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/WP.5 English only	Pandemia as catalyst to enhance cooperation and assistance? Germany's continued implementation of Article X under the special circumstances of COVID-19 – Submitted by Germany
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/WP.6 English only	Challenges and obstacles to international cooperation, assistance and exchange in the biological sciences and technology under Article X – Submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran
BWC/MSP/2020/MX.1/WP.7 English and Spanish only	Difficulties and obstacles faced by Cuba for the full implementation of Article X of the Biological Weapons Convention – Submitted by Cuba