

**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 Japan at the Meeting of States Parties to the
Biological Weapons Convention, December 2023 Geneva**

Submitted by Japan

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador ESPINOSA CAÑIZARES, on assuming the Chairpersonship of the Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. I would like to assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

Japan also reiterates its appreciation to the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) for its dedication to the organisation of relevant BWC meetings, despite the small number of staff members.

Mr. Chair,

The world is at a turning point in history. The impact of COVID-19 is fresh in our minds, the world is seeing attempts to change the status quo by force, and new threats such as the misuse of AI technology are growing amidst the rapid development of science and technology.

At the same time, the international order that has been built and sustained by the international community is being severely shaken, making it more difficult than ever for the international community to cooperate over individual conflicts of interest.

Against this backdrop, at the Ninth Review Conference last December, under the Presidency of Ambassador Bencini of Italy, we, the States Parties, were able to reach a consensus decision to establish a Working Group to specifically discuss measures to strengthen the implementation of the Convention. It is now incumbent upon the States Parties to make the most of this valuable outcome and steadily fulfil the mandate of this Working Group.

Mr. Chair,

The Working Group has already met three times this year. Japan expresses its respect for the able Chairpersonship of Ambassador Damico of Brazil. At the second session, we discussed international cooperation and assistance, scientific and technological developments, the two mechanisms for these, as well as national implementation. Japan hopes that the ICA and S&T Mechanisms will be realized in a way that contributes to achieving the objectives of the Convention.

At the latest third session of the Working Group last week, discussions on verification measures, which had been stalled since 2001, resumed. Our approach on this topic emphasizes the need for practical outcomes rather than theoretical exercises. Active engagement with industrial, health, and medical stakeholders is crucial in order to ensure that resulting measures are not only politically and financially viable but also technically feasible



and acceptable to our citizens. Discussions on transparency and confidence-building measures also took place. Japan continues to be committed to promoting Confidence-Building Measures as a key part of national implementation of the Convention, and has participated in the cooperation projects for improving the submission of CBM reports, particularly in South-East Asian countries. In this regard, Japan welcomes the new record of 100 countries that have submitted CBM Reports. As one of the Friends of the Chair on “Organizational, Institutional and Financial Arrangements”, Japan will continue to support discussions on all the topics at the Working Group, including intersessional discussions throughout 2024 and contribute towards further strengthening the BWC.

In order to achieve results through these efforts, the starting point for strengthening the implementation of the BWC should be the full payment of all assessed contributions, without which we will not be able to convene meetings as planned and collectively chart the way forward in a timely manner. The MSP should urge all States Parties to pay their assessed contributions in full and without delay.

Mr. Chair,

Japan holds the G7 Presidency this year and, as part of its activities, held its second Working Group session of the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction in Nagasaki, the site of the atomic bombing, in November. The meeting brought together representatives of GP member states and international organizations for a lively exchange of views on various initiatives around the globe including programs to enhance bio safety and bio security in Asia and Africa. It is our sincere hope that through these opportunities, further progress can be made in building and strengthening the capacities of countries facing bio-threats to respond to them.

Mr. Chair,

To conclude, in the context of a changing security environment, rapid advances in science and technology, as well as lessons learned from the pandemic, we States Parties need to embody our shared goal of strengthening the Convention through our discussions in the Working Group to better address the threat of biological weapons use. Japan reaffirms its commitment to the BWC and calls on all States Parties to demonstrate the utmost spirit of unity and cooperation to ensure that the Working Group steadily and reliably fulfils its mandate.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.
