
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

3 December 2019

English only

2019 Meeting

Geneva, 3-6 December 2019

Item 6 of the Agenda

Consideration of the factual reports of the Meetings of Experts reflecting their deliberations, including possible outcomes

Implementation of Articles IV and X of the Biological Weapons Convention

Submitted by the Republic of Korea

1. Since the ratification of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in 1987, the Republic of Korea (ROK) has been committed to fulfilling all of its obligations under the BWC and attaches special importance to the national implementation of Article IV and the provision of cooperation and assistance for Article X. This paper provides an update on the activities related Article IV and X.

Article IV: National Implementation

2. The ROK remains of the view that each State Party's robust implementation of the obligations under the Convention is of vital importance in ensuring the effectiveness of the treaty.

3. In order to effectively prohibit and prevent the development of any type of biological weapons and to control the manufacture of biological agents or toxins that can be used as biological weapons, the ROK's Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy (MOTIE) fully revised the *Chemical Weapons Prohibition Act of 2006* into the *Act on the Prohibition of Chemical and Biological Weapons and the Control of the Production, Export, and Import of Specific Chemicals and Biological Agents* (CBWPA). In addition, the CBWPA requires the export of biological agents and toxins to abide by the *Public Notice of Exportation and Importation of Strategic Items* in accordance with the *Foreign Trade Act*.

4. The CBWPA was revised and expanded to provide a comprehensive set of rules and regulations on the prohibition and control of biological agents that had been previously scattered among various Acts, such as the *Infectious Disease Control and Prevention Act*, the *Act on the Prevention of Contagious Animal Diseases*, and the *Plant Protection Act*.

5. With recent dramatic developments in the field of biotechnology, the respective roles of government agencies, the industry, and academia have become more important in the national implementation of the BWC. The Korean government established a framework for close cooperation between government agencies and non-government organizations, with a focus on reinforcement of the national implementation of the BWC, including effective and efficient application of the CBWPA.

6. In line with the advancements in biotechnology, MOTIE has been working with the Korea Biotechnology Industry Organization (KoreaBIO), a non-government organization

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established for promoting technology development and commercialization in the biotechnology industry, in the following three areas:

(a) Policymaking: The Korean BWC implementation committee consists of experts from the government, the industry, and academia. This committee is highly active in providing advice and opinions on government policies on national implementation of the BWC.

(b) Education: Workshops are held annually to increase the competence level of interested parties in biosafety and biosecurity and in preventing the misuse of biotechnology with specific materials. In addition, there are on-site education programs that involve visits to the facilities where biological agents and toxins are processed.

(c) Awareness-raising: In order to raise awareness of the BWC and the CBWPA in the biotechnology industry and academic community, seminars and other events are being held, and a website has been developed. In addition, brochures and periodicals are being published to disseminate information on the CBWPA.

7. KoreaBIO is an important link between the government and non-government sectors to encourage the industry and academic community to actively implement the BWC. Such active participation of the industry and academia is one of the most effective ways to ensure faithful national implementation, and it will promote scientific and technological developments in the relevant fields.

8. The Ministry of National Defense (MND) revised the *Biological Weapons Prohibition Directive* to facilitate the implementation of the BWC in the military, and it has been in force since May 2008. In accordance with the Directive, MND designated Korea Arms Verification Agency (KAVA) as the implementation organization for the MND's biological safety tests and appointed experts in the field of biology as verification members to conduct yearly inspections on biological research facilities within the military.

9. During the regular inspections, the following are monitored: safety of the biological research facilities, as well as the maintenance and management of various documents. The status of implementation of the BWC is verified on site. After reviewing any possible improvements, the MND monitors whether appropriate measures are being taken. The MND is confirming and managing the implementation of the BWC within the military through such safety inspection system and is maintaining the utmost biosafety management.

Article X: International Cooperation

10. The ROK believes that international cooperation is critical in supporting national implementation, which Article X of the BWC acknowledges.

11. The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) is making great efforts to strengthen its capability in detecting, evaluating, reporting, and responding to public health threats to prepare for potential public health crises. In 2016, the KCDC and the World Health Organization Western Pacific Regional Office signed the Memorandum of Understanding for the Field Epidemiology Training Program to promote cooperation in detecting and responding to public health threats.

12. In addition, the KCDC has participated in various activities to counter biological threats such as the ROK-US CBRN table-top exercise (Adaptive Shield) and the International Laboratory Response Network of Biological Threats.

13. The ROK places great importance on preventing biological threats. Since 2005, the ROK has participated in the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction (GP) to contribute proactively to the efforts to prevent terrorists or states that sponsor terrorism from acquiring or developing weapons of mass destruction and related materials, equipment and technology.

14. The ROK has also actively participated in the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA). The ROK is a permanent member (2019-2023) of the GHSA Steering Group and contributes to the area of immunization in GHSA Action Packages. Together with the

Korea International Cooperation Agency, the ROK government has supported capacity building in infectious diseases and laboratory management through projects such as the Development and Implementation of Activities Contributing to the GHSA in Cambodia (2017-2020, USD 3 million), the GHSA Strengthening Project in Ghana (2018-2021, USD 7.5 million), and the Master's Degree Program in GHSA Capacity Building.

15. In addition, the ROK established the Global Disease Eradication Fund (GDEF) for the treatment and prevention of infectious diseases and maternal and child health projects in sub-Saharan Africa in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and other international initiatives. To fund the GDEF, KRW 1,000 (approximately USD 1) is levied on every international flight ticket departing from the ROK. Since 2017, the GDEF has been supporting various projects to strengthen capacity for responding to infectious diseases such as the WHO's Strengthening National Laboratory Systems and the Workforce for Surveillance of Emerging Threats including Antimicrobial Resistance (2017-2021, USD 10 million), the WHO's Building Resilient Health Care Services to Improve Emergency Preparedness (2018-2022, USD 5.84 million), and the WHO's Promoting Global Health Security through Strengthened Capacities for Outbreak Prevention, Detection and Response (2019-2021, USD 12 million).

16. The ROK also shared recent developments in the ROK's export control system at the regional Wiesbaden Conference held in Mexico and Germany in 2017 and in India in 2018. In 2018, the ROK hosted the 2nd United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 Industrial Outreach Conference with support from the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Government of Germany as part of the series of Wiesbaden Conference for the Asia Pacific region. The conference facilitated information exchange between regulators and the industry to find ways to effectively implement UNSCR 1540 (2004). Items on the agenda included: follow-ups to UNSCR 2325 (2016); compliance challenges faced by small and medium sized companies; developing plans for regular national outreach activities; governmental and industrial perspectives on international compliance programs; and challenges in controlling intangible transfers of technology. One of the outcomes of the conference was strengthened international cooperation in developing a more effective strategic trade control system by sharing information about UNSCR 1540-related activities and best practices.

17. The ROK remains committed to fulfilling its obligation under the BWC and is ready to share its experience and practices in the field of national implementation and international cooperation with other States Parties and the private sector to strengthen the Convention.
