

**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**

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Item 7 of the agenda

Comprehensive consideration of all provisions of the Convention

**Report of the Implementation Support Unit on its activities to
implement its mandate, 2012-2016**

Submitted by the Implementation Support Unit

Summary

This report describes the activities of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) since the Seventh Review Conference to implement its mandate to support States Parties in the administration and comprehensive implementation of the Convention, the promotion of universalization, and the exchange of confidence-building measures (CBMs). The Conference decided that the Unit "will submit a concise annual written report to all States Parties on its activities to implement its mandate"¹ and such reports have been submitted annually since 2012. The Conference also decided that the ISU's "performance will be evaluated and its mandate will be reviewed by States Parties at the Eighth Review Conference". This report is submitted to facilitate this evaluation and review by States Parties.

I. Introduction

1. The ISU was established by the Sixth Review Conference to provide administrative support to meetings agreed by the Review Conference as well as comprehensive implementation and universalization of the Convention and the exchange of confidence-building measures.² The Seventh Review Conference decided to renew the mandate of the Unit, *mutatis mutandis*, for the period from 2012 to 2016. The Conference also decided, that in addition to the tasks mandated by the Sixth Review Conference, the ISU will also implement the decision to establish and administer the database for assistance requests and offers, and facilitating the associated exchange of information among States Parties, and

¹ See BWC/CONF.VII/7, Part III, paragraph 36.

² See BWC/CONF.VI/6, Part III, paragraphs 5 and 6.



support, as appropriate, the implementation by the States Parties of the decisions and recommendations of the Seventh Review Conference.

2. The ISU has acted in accordance with this mandate and has submitted annual reports to the Meetings of States Parties in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015.³ This present report summarizes the information provided in the annual reports and also includes information from 1 January until 27 May 2016.

II. Institutional arrangements

3. The ISU is located in the Geneva Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), which supports the ISU through a range of services including financial, logistical, administrative and personnel management. The Branch also facilitates the ISU's compliance with United Nations rules and regulations so as to enhance its effective functioning. The Branch is instrumental in coordinating and liaising with relevant services of the United Nations Office at Geneva that support the organization of BWC meetings and conferences and the administration of the ISU.

A. ISU staffing

4. The ISU has three fixed-term staff positions and has also been assisted by interns. From 2012 until 2014, the ISU had stability in staffing with the same three individuals occupying the P5, P3 and P2 posts since the establishment of the ISU in 2007. These were, respectively, Mr. Richard Lennane, Head of the ISU, Mr. Piers Millett, Political Affairs Officer and Deputy Head of the ISU and Ms. Ngoc Phuong van der Blij, Associate Political Affairs Officer. However, staff capacity was significantly reduced for the first six months of 2013 due to the temporary absence of one staff member.

5. The years since 2014 have seen significant staffing changes within the ISU. In 2014, both Mr. Lennane and Mr. Millett left the ISU. For much of that year, the ISU was reinforced by the temporary relocation of staff from UNODA New York, namely Ms. Gabrielle Kraatz-Wadsack as Acting Head, and Ms. Katherine Prizeman as Associate Political Affairs Officer. Also during 2014, the P3 and P2 posts were reviewed and States Parties agreed that they should be upgraded to a P4 and a P3 post respectively. In late 2014, a new Chief of the ISU was appointed, Mr. Daniel Feakes. During 2015, recruitment was undertaken for both the P4 and P3 posts, and the ISU operated with only two staff for the entire year. Ms. van der Blij was appointed to the P3 post in late 2015, and Mr. Hermann Lampalzer was appointed to the P4 post in January 2016. Selection and recruitment of ISU staff members is undertaken in accordance with United Nations rules and regulations. From May to November 2016, staff capacity in the ISU will again be significantly reduced due to the temporary absence of one staff member. For almost half of the period from 2012 to 2016 the ISU was or will be operating at two-thirds of its intended capacity.

6. With a small number of staff, any instability in staffing can have a significant impact on the work of the ISU. While the ISU has continued to maintain the same level of service to States Parties and to the Chairmen, the staffing situation has meant that some activities had to be postponed and invitations to events had to be declined. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the current funding arrangements for the ISU do not permit the recruitment of temporary staff to cover such gaps and also do not allow unspent funds from

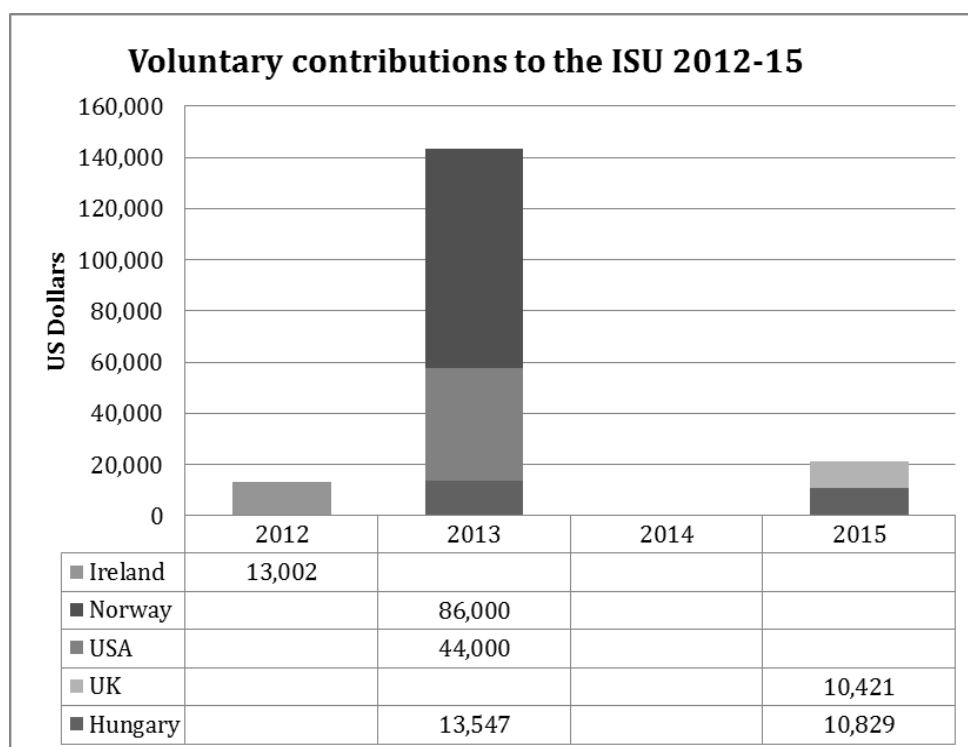
³ See BWC/MSP/2012/2, BWC/MSP/2013/4, BWC/MSP/2014/4 and Corr.1 and Corr.2, and BWC/MSP/2015/3 and Add.1.

one year to be rolled over to the next year. There may be merit in addressing this matter in case similar situations arise in the future, for example due to maternity leave, long-term sick leave or other staffing changes.

B. ISU funding

7. In accordance with the decision on its establishment taken by the Sixth Review Conference, the ISU is funded by the States Parties to the Convention. The costs of the ISU are included in the annual assessed contributions from States Parties and are generally included within the costs for the first BWC meeting of the year. During the 2012-15 intersessional period, these costs included the expenditures relating to the three staff members, a small travel budget of USD 20,000 per year and a small equipment budget of USD 5,000 per year.⁴ For example, the total annual cost of the ISU in 2016 is USD 760,700 including staff, travel and equipment costs, and programme support costs.⁵

8. As encouraged by the Seventh Review Conference, and to assist in the pursuit of its mandate, the ISU has also received voluntary contributions from several States Parties in a position to do so. The chart below shows the contributions received. The contributions from Ireland and Hungary were used to support ISU participation in relevant meetings and workshops, especially in developing countries. The contribution from Norway was used to organize a workshop for industry and other non-government actors in Canada, while the contribution from the United States of America was used to support regional and international participation in a BWC implementation seminar organized by Chile. The contribution from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was used to support the event in Geneva to mark the fortieth anniversary of the BWC.



⁴ See BWC/CONF.VII/4/Rev.1.

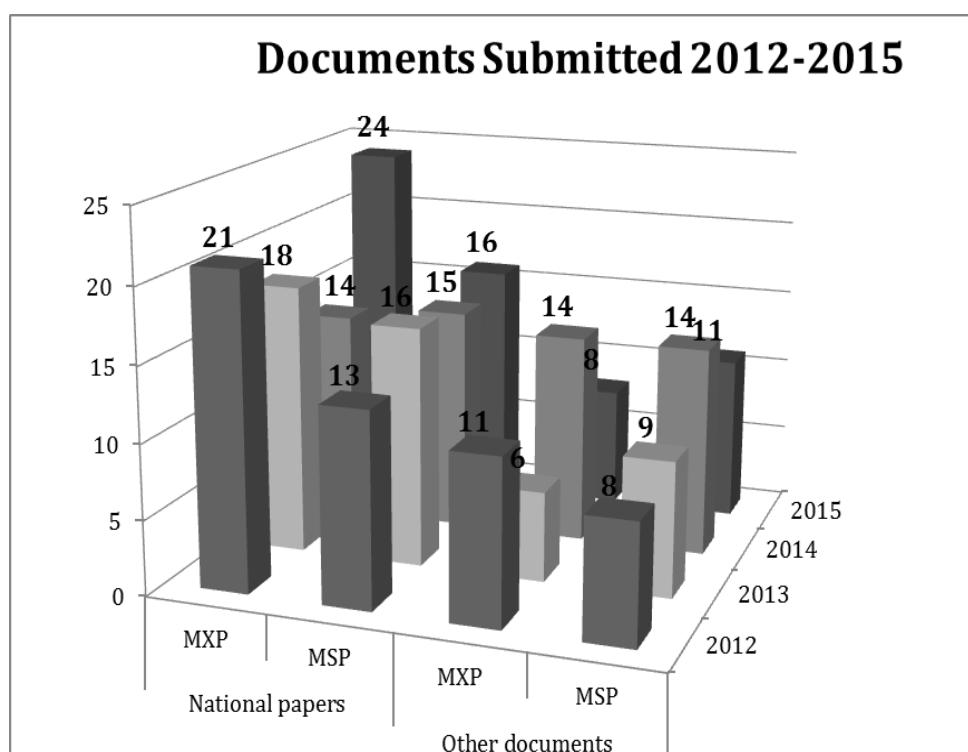
⁵ See BWC/MSP/2015/5*.

9. In addition, the European Union has supported the BWC through the adoption of two Council Decisions. Each decision involved financial contributions to UNODA for activities in support of the BWC. Between July 2012 and January 2015, the EU provided EUR 1,700,000 under Council Decision 2012/421/CFSP and EUR 2,340,000 starting in January 2016 under Council Decision 2016/51/CFSP. Under these two decisions, numerous activities have been undertaken in States Parties and two staff have been employed within UNODA's Geneva Branch in the professional and general service categories.

10. As noted above, instability in staffing and lack of human and financial resources have constituted the main constraints on the ISU fulfilling its mandate. While voluntary contributions are very welcome, they are often earmarked by States Parties for specific events or activities, and do not always assist the ISU in responding to individual requests from States Parties on a broad geographical basis. Additional budgeted resources would significantly increase the ability of the ISU to fulfil the existing terms of its mandate to support implementation in all States Parties. Any expansion of the ISU's current mandate would certainly require additional resources.

III. Administrative support for the Convention

11. The ISU formed the substantive Secretariat for BWC meetings during the 2012-15 intersessional programme, and supported the activities of the annual Chairmen. This included: drafting and issuing communications to States Parties, international organisations and NGOs; drafting speeches and other materials for the Chairmen; processing meeting registrations; researching and drafting substantive background documents; preparing conference documents and reports; processing working papers; and providing procedural, technical and substantive advice to the Chairmen and States Parties.



12. The ISU continued to develop the BWC website⁶ to increase its utility not only for States Parties, but also for outreach, awareness-raising and communication to a global audience. The website continues to act as the primary tool for the dissemination of information related to the Convention by, and to, States Parties. The website provides up-to-date information on meetings and related activities, official documents, statements, press releases, background materials, information on relevant activities in other organisations, useful links, and membership lists. The maintenance of the website is supported by the United Nations Office at Geneva. In 2015, the ISU continued to restructure and add material to the website, including interactive maps. In addition, more prominence was given to the sections on the cooperation and assistance database and the sponsorship programme.

13. To facilitate preparations for the Eighth Review Conference by States Parties, the ISU has, as it did prior to the Seventh Review Conference, created a "think zone" page on the BWC website which aggregates information that may be of use to States Parties. With the same objective, the ISU has also created separate pages which compile thematically all working papers submitted under the three standing agenda items and the two biennial agenda items from 2012 to 2015.

14. The ISU has also made use of social media to increase awareness about the BWC. In early 2015, the ISU created a Facebook page which now has over 270 "likes"⁷. At the same time, the ISU also reactivated the ISU Twitter account which had previously been dormant.⁸ Since its reactivation, the account has attracted over 750 followers. Both tools are designed to complement the BWC website which remains the primary repository of documents and information on the Convention.

15. The ISU maintained regular contact with many scientific, professional and academic institutions as well as industry and non-governmental organisations. These contacts have provided insight and information that assisted the ISU in supporting the efforts of States Parties, including in the preparation of background information documents.

16. The ISU maintained regular contact with a wide range of international organizations relevant to the Convention, as detailed in its annual reports. The ISU, in activities fully consistent with its mandate, remains an active participant in regular processes, outreach and implementation efforts undertaken by these organizations.

17. The ISU maintained contact with the regional organizations detailed in past ISU reports and has also begun to work more closely with the African Union Commission (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

IV. Implementation of the Convention

18. The ISU collects details of national points of contact for the Convention and makes them available to all States Parties on the restricted area of the BWC website.⁹ As of 27 May 2016, 101 States Parties had nominated a national point of contact as requested by the Sixth and Seventh Review Conferences. Two signatory States, four States not party and one regional organization have also provided points of contact. Up to 2013, the ISU also maintained and updated the National Implementation Database and the Compendium of National Approaches on the BWC website. However, due to resource constraints and duplication with similar efforts by other entities, these tools were discontinued.

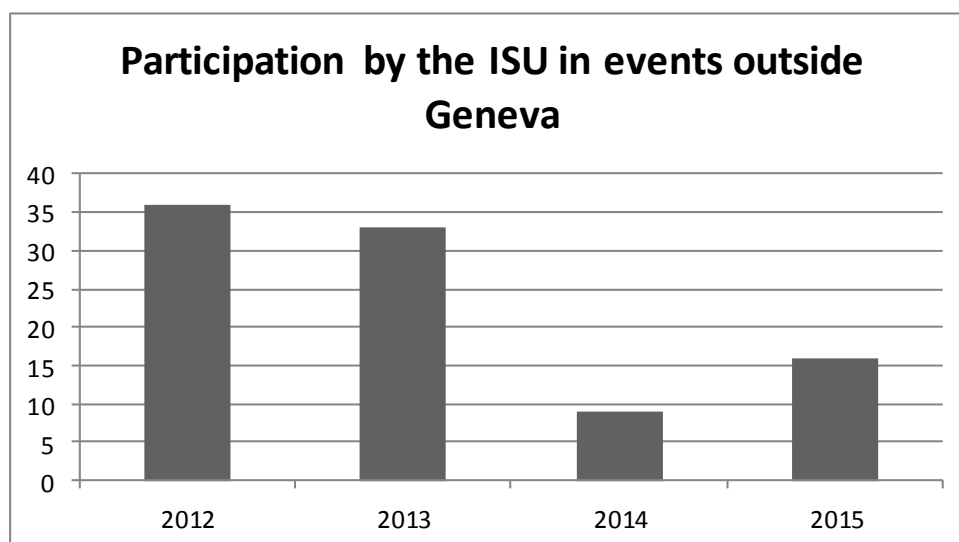
⁶ See www.unog.ch/bwc

⁷ See www.facebook.com/1972BWC

⁸ See www.twitter.com/BWCISU

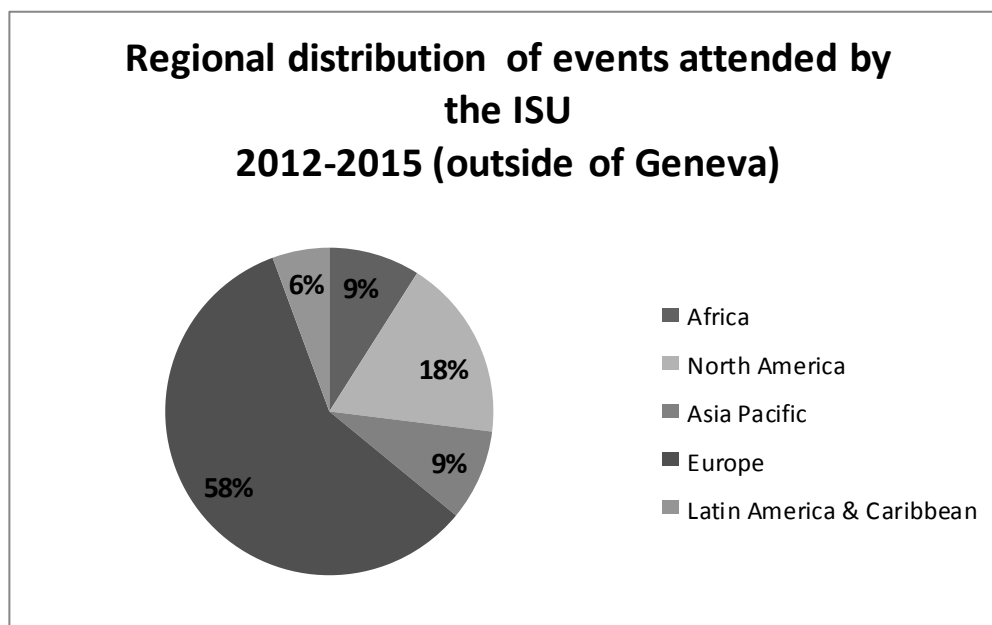
⁹ See www.unog.ch/bwc/restricted

19. Participation by the ISU in workshops and seminars plays a crucial role in raising awareness of the Convention and its implementation, both for national governments and other relevant actors such as international and regional organizations, the scientific community, professional associations, academia and the private sector. The ISU accepted select invitations to participate in a range of meetings and events throughout the intersessional period. Details of the events attended are provided in the annual reports of the ISU. The chart below gives an overview for the period of the 2012-15 intersessional programme and clearly shows the effect on ISU outreach of the staffing shortages and instability during 2014 and 2015.



20. Additionally, the ISU co-hosted or otherwise supported the planning and organisation of several meetings and events directly related to the Convention. For example, in September 2013 the ISU co-hosted with Norway and the Biotechnology Industry Organization an international workshop on "Safeguarding the benefits of Biotechnology", in Montreal, Canada and in October 2013 the ISU helped to plan and organize, and participated in, a regional seminar hosted by Chile on "Biological Material and Biosafety in the Framework of the Biological Weapons Convention". In March 2015, the ISU in cooperation with the Chairman and the Depositary Governments organized an event in Geneva to mark the fortieth anniversary of the BWC. In October 2015, the ISU cooperated with the African Union Commission to organize a workshop in Addis Ababa on the universalization of the BWC in Africa which was attended by several States not party and Signatory States.

21. However, the ISU also has to decline many invitations to participate in meetings or other events directly related to the Convention. Because of its limited travel budget the ISU tends to participate more in events where the organizers can cover the travel costs which generally take place in developed countries. The effects of this can be seen in the chart below which shows that most external events in which the ISU participated from 2012 to 2015 take place in Europe and North America. Additional human and financial resources would allow the ISU to improve the regional distribution of its activities and to prioritize its travel according to the needs of States Parties, rather than according to solely pragmatic considerations of what is financially possible.



V. Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs)

22. In accordance with the decisions of the Sixth and Seventh Review Conferences, the ISU continues to support the exchange of confidence-building measures (CBMs). The ISU maintains electronic versions of the CBM forms on the BWC website in all official languages. All the CBM returns since the Seventh Review Conference are available to States Parties in the restricted area of the BWC website.¹⁰ A growing number of States Parties have requested that their CBM submissions are also made available in the public area of the website.¹¹

23. In accordance with the decision of the Sixth Review Conference, on 15 January every year, the Chief of the ISU writes to the permanent missions and the national points of contact of the States Parties informing them of the deadline for the annual CBM submission. In accordance with the decision of the 2013 Meeting of States Parties¹², the Chairman of the 2015 Meeting of States Parties and the President-Designate of the Review Conference also included CBM reminders in their correspondence with States Parties.

24. More information on the status of participation in CBMs and the operation of the system since the Seventh Review Conference can be found in document BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/3.

¹⁰ See www.unog.ch/bwc/restricted

¹¹ See www.unog.ch/bwc/cbms

¹² See BWC/MSP/2013/5, paragraph 45.

VI. Cooperation and assistance

A. National reports on Article X implementation

25. The Seventh Review Conference encouraged States Parties to provide at least biannually appropriate information on how they implement Article X of the Convention to the ISU and requested the ISU to collate such information for the information of States Parties.¹³ A total of 10 States Parties, one regional organization and one group of States have submitted at least one such report during the intersessional period (see the table below). The ISU has collated the reports on the BWC website.¹⁴

<i>State/group</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>
Australia	X		X	X
Canada	X	X		X
China	X			
Cuba	X			X
European Union	X	X		
Germany		X	X	
G7 Global Partnership				X
India			X	
Iraq		X		
Japan		X		X
United Kingdom				X
United States	X	X	X	
Total	6	6	4	6

B. Cooperation and assistance database

26. The Seventh Review Conference decided to establish a "database system to facilitate requests for and offers of exchange of assistance and cooperation among States Parties".¹⁵ The Conference mandated the ISU to establish and administer a database where the requests and offers would be stored; to facilitate, on request, the exchange of information among States Parties relating to the database and any resulting cooperation and assistance activities; and to report to States Parties on the operation of the database detailing the offers made, requests sought and matches made during a calendar year.

27. As decided by the 2013 Meeting of States Parties, the offers of assistance are available on the public area of the BWC website, while the requests for assistance are available to States Parties in the restricted area of the website.¹⁶ As of 27 May 2016, the database contained:

¹³ See BWC/CONF.VII/7, Section II, paragraph 61.

¹⁴ See

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/\(httpPages\)/226CFDF7E6D66BE4C1257AC4004A1FF8?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/80256EE600585943/(httpPages)/226CFDF7E6D66BE4C1257AC4004A1FF8?OpenDocument)

¹⁵ See BWC/CONF.VII/7, Part III, paragraphs 17–20.

¹⁶ See BWC/MSP/2013/5, paragraph 22(a).

(a) A total of 60 offers of assistance, from seven States Parties (Canada, Cuba, France, Germany, Mexico, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America) and one group of States Parties (the Australia Group); and

(b) A total of 19 requests for assistance, from six States Parties; and one update of a request of assistance. Since the last report in November 2015, 15 new entries have been recorded by the ISU.

28. The ISU has included specific presentations on the database in its outreach activities and in 2015 made the database more prominent on the BWC website, although the requests are still only accessible to States Parties on the restricted area of the ISU website.

29. The ISU has also maintained regular contact with relevant assistance providers. For example, the ISU worked with providers of assistance for related national legislation and enforcement measures such as the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC) and the Committee established pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004).

30. The objective of a "database system" has not yet been reached. The Seventh Review Conference tasked the ISU with the establishment and maintenance of a database, a basic version of which is available on the BWC website. However, the Review Conference did not allocate any additional resources for the development of a fully functioning database and consequently the function of matching offers of and requests for assistance has not worked as well as was hoped. Furthermore, as recognized by the 2014 Meeting of States Parties, usage of the database by States Parties has been "low".¹⁷ Until recently, few offers or requests had been submitted to the ISU and even now there are many more offers of assistance than requests. This could be partly a result of the requests for assistance being placed on the restricted area of the BWC website.

31. It has become apparent that some potential requesting States Parties would rather have their needs addressed informally or on a bilateral level, rather than having the information appear in the database. A part of the problem may be the lack of precision in the requests and offers, which could derive from a lack of structure to the whole process. A more structured approach to identifying needs and providing assistance as found in similar mechanisms, could remedy some of the existing problems. A first step could be to provide resources for a more user-friendly database and for the ISU to proactively inform all States Parties when requests or offers are added to the database.

32. The 2013 and 2014 Meetings of States Parties noted the value of assessing the functionality of the database, strengthening its utilization and improving its operation. In accordance with the decision of the Seventh Review Conference, the operation of the database will be reviewed at the Eighth Review Conference.

C. Sponsorship programme

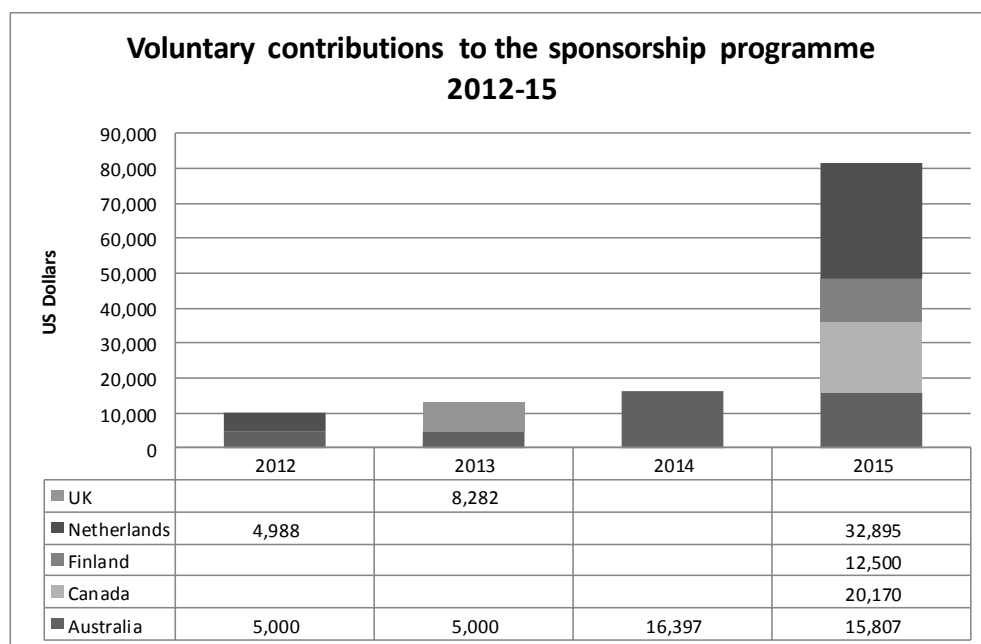
33. The Seventh Review Conference established a sponsorship programme to "support and increase the participation of developing States Parties in the meetings of the intersessional programme".¹⁸ The programme is funded by voluntary contributions from States Parties in a position to provide them and is administered by the ISU in consultation

¹⁷ See BWC/MSP/2014/5, paragraph 22.

¹⁸ BWC/CONF.VII/7, Part III, paragraph 21.

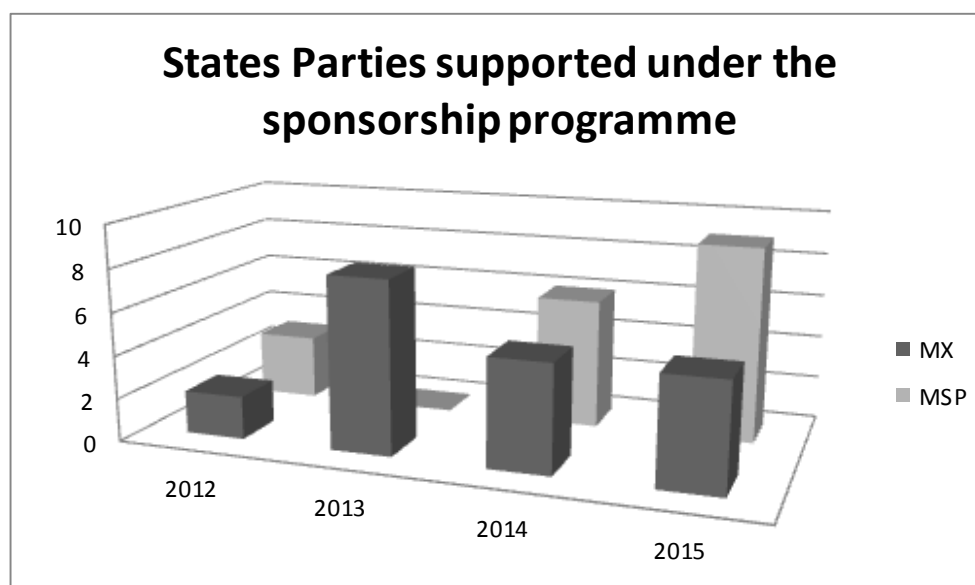
with the Chair and Vice-chairs of the Meeting of States Parties. Criteria for selection were also agreed by the Seventh Review Conference, namely that priority for sponsorship would be given to those States Parties which have previously not participated in the meetings, or have been unable to regularly send experts from capital. In addition, sponsorship may also be provided, depending upon the availability of resources, to enhance participation of states not party in order to promote universalization of the Convention.

34. The chart below shows the voluntary contributions that have been made to the sponsorship programme from 2012 to 2015. It should be noted that the European Union also contributed to the programme in 2012, 2013 and 2014 under the Council Decision mentioned above. In addition, Germany and the United States of America sponsored participation by national experts through bilateral arrangements outside of the sponsorship programme administered by the ISU.



35. As the chart above shows, voluntary contributions to the sponsorship programme have varied in their regularity and amounts. This makes it hard for the ISU to predict how many national experts can be sponsored to attend a particular meeting and likewise means that national experts lack predictability concerning their attendance. This complicates travel arrangements and the preparations by national experts. Predictability for States Parties could be improved, for example, by the inclusion of a budget line for the sponsorship programme in the approved budget of a future intersessional programme.

36. The unpredictability of voluntary contributions to the sponsorship programme has had an impact on the number of experts able to be supported. The chart below provides details of the number of experts supported for the Meetings of Experts and Meetings of States Parties during the 2012-15 intersessional programme.



VII. Promotion of universalization

37. The ISU supported the Chairmen and Vice-Chairs in their activities to promote universalization, preparing correspondence and briefing material, and helping to organize outreach events. As reported in the annual ISU reports and also in the annual reports on the status of universalization of the Convention, the ISU accompanied the Chairmen of the Meetings of States Parties to a number of bilateral meetings in Geneva and New York with representatives of States not party and Signatory States. In advance of such meetings, the ISU prepared a universalization kit to be distributed to each of these States.

38. The ISU provided information and advice to States Parties conducting their own outreach activities to promote universalization. The ISU also promoted universalization during the seminars and events in which it participated, at which representatives of States not parties were present. As it became available, the ISU consolidated and published information on progress towards universality in the restricted area of the ISU website.

39. Further details on the status of universalization and progress since the Seventh Review Conference can be found in document BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/8.

VIII. Conclusions

40. As described in the annual reports of the ISU, the decision of the Seventh Review Conference to assign additional tasks to the ISU without increasing its resources posed a challenge throughout the intersessional period. The concerns raised in the 2011 ISU report to the Seventh Review Conference about the capacity of the ISU to respond to the requests of States Parties and the geographic distribution of ISU activity remain unresolved.¹⁹ This challenge has been exacerbated by the fact that the ISU has been operating at two-thirds strength for half of the intersessional period as described in paragraphs 4 and 5 above,

¹⁹ See BWC/CONF.VII/3, paragraphs 27 and 30.

combined with the fact that there it is not possible to recruit temporary staff to cover such situations since no budgetary provision is made to cover such cases.

41. The mandate of the ISU has proved to be adequately broad in practice, and has not caused any operational problems for the Unit in responding to requests from States Parties, or in dealing with other organisations. However, the staff shortages and instability mean that the services offered by the ISU are oversubscribed, and approximately one in three invitations to the ISU to participate in an event or activity has had to be turned down either because of lack of available staff, or insufficient travel funds.

42. The ISU would like to record its appreciation for the cooperation and support of States Parties in the course of its operations over the past five years.
