The Biological Weapons Convention

Ngoc Phuong Huynh
BWC Implementation Support Unit
United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
(Geneva Branch)
BWC Facts and Figures

- Full name: *Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction*
- **BTWC or BWC**
- Opened for signature in 1972; entered into force in 1975
- The BWC is one of the three fundamental pillars of the international community's effort against WMD, along with the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention
BWC facts and figures

• Current membership:
  – 163 States Parties
  – 13 signatories
  – 19 states neither signed nor ratified

• Main provisions:
  – completely prohibits any acquisition or retention of biological or toxin weapons; no exceptions
  – prohibits assisting or encouraging others to acquire BW
  – requires national implementation measures
  – peaceful uses of biological science and technology to be protected and encouraged
Timeline of intersessional programmes

FIFTH REVIEW CONFERENCE

2003 – 2005 Intersessional Process

SIXTH REVIEW CONFERENCE

2007 – 2010 Intersessional Process

SEVENTH REVIEW CONFERENCE

MEETING OF EXPERTS

MEETING OF STATES PARTIES

Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction
Mandate and features

• Mandate to “discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action on” specific topics related to better implementation of the BTWC

• Objective is sharing information and experience, identifying best practices, improving effectiveness of the BTWC

• Chair for each year nominated by regional groups in rotation

• Implementation Support Unit coordinates preparations, prepares background papers, etc

• Meetings do not take binding decisions, but do reach “common understandings” on key areas for “effective action” (= de facto guidelines)

• Reports of the Meetings of States Parties are a useful resource for BTWC national implementation efforts
BWC intersessional work program

- BIOSAFETY & BIOSECURITY
- OVERSIGHT, EDUCATION & OUTREACH
- RESPONSE TO USE OR THREAT OF USE

2007
2008
2009
2010

- NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION
- REGIONAL ACTIVITIES/COOP.
- CAPACITY BUILDING FOR DISEASE SURVEILLANCE, DETECTION, DIAGNOSIS, AND CONTAINMENT

Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction
# 2007 common understandings: nat. implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENTS</th>
<th>MECHANISMS</th>
<th>ENFORCEMENT CAPACITY</th>
<th>ONGOING ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient penal legislation for prosecuting prohibited activities</td>
<td>Promoting cooperation and coordination among government agencies</td>
<td>Building capacity to collect evidence</td>
<td>Regular reviews of adopted measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibition of assisting, encouraging or inducing others to conduct prohibited activities</td>
<td>Defining roles of different agencies and bodies</td>
<td>Developing early warning systems</td>
<td>Ensuring continued relevance of national measures in light of scientific and technological development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strengthening national capacity (including human and technological resources)</td>
<td>Raising awareness of BWC amongst relevant stakeholders</td>
<td>Enhancing coordination between relevant agencies</td>
<td>Updating lists of agents and equipment</td>
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<td>Effective export / import controls</td>
<td>Improving dialogue and communication amongst relevant stakeholders</td>
<td>Training law enforcement personnel</td>
<td>Implementing additional measures as required</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avoid hampering peaceful use of biological sciences</td>
<td>Establishing a central body or lead organisation</td>
<td>Providing enforcement agencies with necessary scientific and technological support</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Crating a national implementation action plan</td>
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### 2008: common understandings: biosafety/biosecurity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENTS</th>
<th>TOOLS</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>ASSISTANCE NEEDED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Developing national biosafety and biosecurity frameworks</td>
<td>• Accreditation</td>
<td>Measures should:</td>
<td>• To enact and improve relevant legislation&lt;br&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Defining the role of different national agencies and bodies</td>
<td>• Certification</td>
<td>• Be practical</td>
<td>• To strengthen laboratory infrastructure, technology, security and management</td>
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<td>• Building national, regional and international networks of relevant</td>
<td>• Audit or licensing for facilities, organisations or individuals</td>
<td>• Be sustainable</td>
<td>• To conduct courses and provide training</td>
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<tr>
<td>stakeholders</td>
<td>• Training requirements for staff members</td>
<td>• Be enforceable</td>
<td>• To help incorporate biosafety and biosecurity into existing efforts to address disease</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Taking better advantage of assistance already available</td>
<td>• Mechanisms to check qualifications, expertise and training</td>
<td>• Be readily understood</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Improving bilateral, regional and international cooperation to build</td>
<td>• National criteria for relevant activities</td>
<td>• Be developed with stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td>relevant capacity</td>
<td>• National lists of relevant agents, equipment and other resources</td>
<td>• Avoid unduly restricting peaceful use</td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Enhancing the role played by the ISU</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Be adapted for local needs</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Be appropriate for agents being handled</td>
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<td>• Be suitable for work being undertaken</td>
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<td>• Make use of risk assessment, management and communication approaches</td>
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### Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction

BTWC: Current topics<br>Amman, 24-27 January 2011
## 2008 common understandings: oversight/awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OVERSIGHT CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>EDUCATION &amp; AWARENESS RAISING COMPONENTS</th>
<th>NEXT STEPS FOR CODES OF CONDUCT</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Develop national oversight frameworks:  
  - To prevent agents and toxins being used as weapons  
  - To oversee relevant people, materials, knowledge and information  
  - To oversee the entire scientific life cycle  
  - To cover private & public sectors  
  - That are proportional to risk  
  - That avoid unnecessary burdens  
  - That are practical and usable  
  - That do not unduly restrict permitted activities  
  - With the involvement of stakeholders in all stages of design and implementation  
  - That can be harmonised regionally and internationally | Formal requirements for seminars, modules or courses in relevant scientific education and training programmes that:  
  - Explain the risks associated with the malign use of biology  
  - Cover moral & ethical obligations  
  - Provide guidance on the types of activities which could be prohibited  
  - Are supported by accessible teaching materials, seminars, workshops, publications and audio-visual materials  
  - Address leading scientists, managers and future generations of scientists  
  - Can be integrated into existing national, regional and international efforts |  
  - Complement national legislative, regulatory and oversight frameworks  
  - Help guide science so it is not used for prohibited purposes  
  - Further develop strategies to encourage voluntary adoption of codes |
Biothreats: the 21st Century view

• Government biological weapons programs
• Non-state actors: bioterrorism
• Naturally-occurring, emerging and re-emerging disease
• Rapidly growing biotech capabilities, shrinking costs, and widely expanding interest, participation, availability and access
  – Unintended consequences, experiments gone wrong
  – Accidents, leaks, mistakes – or deliberate misuse or sabotage
    (bio-terror vs. bio-error)
  – Awareness and management of risks lagging far behind
The Spectrum of Biological Risk

“We must look at [the BWC] as part of an interlinked array of tools, designed to deal with an interlinked array of problems” – Kofi Annan, 2006
THE SPECTRUM OF BIOLOGICAL RISK – NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Growing need for coordination and cooperation among government agencies

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Responding to Biological Risk

Natural → Accidental BIORISK → Deliberate

UNSCR 1540

Global

UNICRI CBRN

IMPACT

INTERPOL

Individual

UN GLOBAL COUNTER TERRORISM STRATEGY

Biocrime

Biological Warfare

Accidental spread of Ebola

Accidental Anthrax Outbreak

UNSG INVESTIGATIONS

OIE

FAO

OECD BIOSECURITY

WHO

Infecting myself with a cold

My last cold

Rinderpest Outbreak in Free area

Influenza Pandemic

BTWC: Current topics
Amman, 24-27 January 2011

Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction
A Shared Responsibility

“Governments alone cannot confront the risks posed by biological weapons ... to manage the full spectrum of biological risks, you need a cohesive, coordinated network of activities and resources. Such a network will help to ensure that biological science and technology can be safely and securely developed for the benefit of all.”

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General, 2008
WMD PREVENTION – THE TRADITIONAL VISION

Nuclear Weapons
Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty
International Atomic Energy Agency

Chemical Weapons
Chemical Weapons Convention
Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Biological Weapons
Biological Weapons Convention

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WMD Regime: Traditional Model

Treaty

Organisation

State  State  State  State  State

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New approach: the network model?

SCR 1540

INTERPOL

BWC

WHO

OIE

FAO

State

Professional associations

Industry

Scientific organisations

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BWC integrated approach

- INTERPOL
- BWC
- WHO
- OIE
- FAO
- SCR 1540
- State
- ISU
- Professional associations
- Industry
- Scientific organisations

BTWC: Current topics
Amman, 24-27 January 2011

Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction
Building the network
The Implementation Support Unit (ISU)

- Established by the Sixth Review Conference in 2006
- Housed in Geneva Branch of UN Office for Disarmament Affairs
- Officially operational in August 2007
- Funded by BWC States Parties
- Three full-time staff
- To be reviewed by Seventh Review Conference in 2011
Mandate of the ISU

• “Help States Parties help themselves”
• Provide administrative support for BWC meetings
• Facilitate communication among States Parties and with relevant organizations
• Support national implementation efforts
• Administer confidence-building measures (CBMs)
• Support universalization activities
What can you ask from the ISU?

• Information
• Education, training and awareness raising
• Communication
• Administrative support
• Assistance (coordination)
Information

- “Serving as a focal point for submission of information by and to States Parties”
- “Serving as an information exchange point for assistance related to preparation of CBMs”
- Providing access to information and resources

Communication

- Sixth Review Conference requested States Parties to nominate national points of contact
- ISU communicates with national points of contact as well as with permanent missions in Geneva or New York
- Facilitate communication among States Parties and with relevant organizations
Administrative support

• Administer confidence-building measures (CBMs)
• BWC meetings
• Support activities of the Chairman
• Research and preparation of background papers
• Act as substantive secretariat for the meetings

Education, training & awareness raising

• Organisation of awareness raising seminars and workshops: support in drafting agenda, list of participants, lists of speakers
• ISU participates in outreach, awareness raising activities
**Assistance from other States Parties**

- “The Conference urges States Parties with relevant experience in legal and administrative measures for the implementation of the provisions of the Convention, to provide assistance on request to other States Parties.”

- ISU helps the States Parties help themselves
- ISU uses network to provide assistance
- ISU maintains a list of generic offers of assistance made by States Parties to date
What kind of assistance from States Parties?

- National implementation
- Confidence-building measures (CBMs)
- Participation in intersessional process
- Anything else related to improving implementation of the Convention…
Security vs development?

Kofi Annan, 2006

“Building public health capacities can strengthen safeguards against bioterrorism. And being better prepared to deal with terrorism can mean better public health systems overall. Similarly, the availability of training and technology is crucial to improving laboratory safety and security, and making labs safe and secure encourages cooperation and creates opportunities for development.”
Universalisation

Encourage others to join the BWC is our common interest:

• BWC as a forum for cooperation in meeting our international security obligations
• Strengthening our national public health, veterinary, agricultural and emergency-response capacities
• Joining the BWC is simple, free, and will lead to international recognition
• Support is available to help with implementation of the BWC's obligations
Why implement the BWC?

- National implementation: too difficult?
- More work, more efforts, more time, more financial constraints?
- We have other priorities, more pressing problems to solve!
- Do we need assistance?
  - We need assistance, but what kind?
  - How shall we start?
- Assistance is available (from States Parties, EUJA, ISU, VERTIC, IOs…)
- Coordination, cooperation, legislation improve national efficiency and makes life easier!
- Positive impact on the economy: good legal system improve a state’s reputation (multinational, tourism etc.)
- True. But WMD. Minimum: stay informed/interested. Nominate a National contact point
- Help us help yourselves! Contact the ISU!
Aims of this Workshop: BTWC Implementation

THEORY → PRACTICE
Aims of this Workshop

Adopting national implementing legislation
Aims of this Workshop

Nominated a national contact point
Aims of this Workshop

Achieving inter-agency cooperation
Aims of this Workshop

Participating in the confidence-building measures (CBMs)
Aims of this Workshop

Strengthening the BTWC
2011: Seventh Review Conference

- The Sixth Review Conference in 2006 decided that the Seventh RevCon:
  - should be held in Geneva
  - should review the operation of the Convention, taking into account, inter alia:
    (i) new scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention;
    (ii) the progress made by States Parties on the implementation of the obligations under the Convention;
    (iii) progress of the implementation of the decisions and recommendations agreed upon at the Sixth Review Conference.

- MSP 2010 decided that:
  - Ambassador Paul van den IJssel of Netherlands as the President
  - Preparatory Committee from 13 to 15 April 2011
  - Review Conference from 5 to 22 December 2011
2011: Seventh Review Conference

- Think zone
- Meetings: Wilton Park (September 2010), Beijing (November 2010), Nairobi (May 2011)

  The workshop in Beijing revealed six areas:
  1. Science and Technology
  2. CBMs
  3. The intersessional process
  4. The ISU
  5. Cooperation and Assistance (Article X)
  6. Verification and Compliance
For more information...
www.unog.ch/bwc

Or contact:

BWC Implementation Support Unit
United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (Geneva Branch)
Room C.115, Palais des Nations
Geneva
tel: +41 (0)22 917 2230
fax: +41 (0)22 917 0483
e-mail: bwc@unog.ch

THANK YOU!