

**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**

Geneva, 4-7 December 2018

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To the Permanent Representatives of the States Parties  
and Signatories to the Convention on the Prohibition  
of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological  
(Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction

21 February 2018

**BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION: LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

Excellency,

I have the honour to convey the attached letter from the Chairman of the 2018 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, Mr. Ljupčo Jivan Gjorgjinski, of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Daniel Feakes  
Chief, BWC Implementation Support Unit



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**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**  
TO THE UN, WTO AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN GENEVA

Nº 16 - 01 - 171/1

Geneva, 20 February 2018

**BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION 2018 MEETING OF STATES PARTIES**

Excellency,

I write to you in my capacity as Chair of the 2018 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). I would like to begin by thanking you for the confidence you have expressed in supporting my appointment.

Allow me to share with you the principles I plan to govern myself by, principles I believe will be useful as we go forward with our work this year:

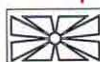
**First, Do No Harm.** The BWC is a normative milestone — the first multilateral disarmament treaty that bans a whole category of weapons. We must, thus, be careful not to unravel previous collective accomplishments.

**Second, Maintain a Steady Course.** We must work in a focused and steady manner, with a view to both this year's MSP, but also with a view to the Ninth Review Conference in 2021.

**Third, Carefully Explore Possibilities.** The possibilities need not be new. Many good ideas were circulated during the Review Conference. We may be prudently creative in finding ways to strengthen this important international framework. Going forward, we may seek to build on what we have accomplished together, within the realm of the possible.

In all, the possibilities must fall within our collective mandate and within the given timeline.

To: The Permanent Representatives of the States Parties  
and signatories to the Convention on the Prohibition  
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## **Mandate and Timeline**

As you will recall, last December, the 2017 BWC Meeting of States Parties (MSP) successfully reached consensus on an intersessional programme from 2018 to 2020. This programme involves twelve days of meetings each year from 2018 to 2020. The Meetings of Experts (MX) for eight days will be held back-to-back and at least three months before the annual MSPs of four days each.

As stated in the letter from the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) dated 23 January 2018, the MXs and MSP in 2018 will take place on the following dates:

7-8 August 2018:	MX1 - Cooperation and Assistance, with a Particular Focus on Strengthening Cooperation and Assistance under Article X
9-10 August 2018:	MX2 - Review of Developments in the Field of Science and Technology Related to the Convention
13 August 2018:	MX3 - Strengthening National Implementation
14-15 August 2018:	MX4 - Assistance, Response and Preparedness
16 August 2018:	MX5 - Institutional Strengthening of the Convention
4-7 December 2018:	Meeting of States Parties

## **Preparations for this year's meetings**

Our work last year ended with a sense of common purpose under the excellent Chairmanship of Ambassador Gill and your collectively demonstrated flexibility and dedication. I hope we will continue on this path in order to create a strong foundation for the Ninth Review Conference in 2021. Our meetings this year have additional weight as they will set the standard for the meetings to take place in 2019 and 2020. This is a truncated intersessional programme, so we must work as effectively and efficiently as possible and make a focused effort during the time available to us.

We have a busy year ahead, with five MXs and an MSP. I hope to start the preparations for the Meetings of Experts as soon as the Chairs are nominated and confirmed. I am pleased that one regional group has already informed the name of the Chair of MX1. I would encourage the other groups to nominate enthusiastic and skilled Chairs latest by the end of March. These individuals will play a key role in guiding our substantive discussions this year. I intend to hold several coordination meetings between now and August with the Chairs of the MXs, so it is important that they are able to take up their responsibilities by mid-April.

I propose to consult the regional groups for an initial exchange of views on the preparations for the meetings in early March and I will be in contact with the regional group coordinators in the coming days in this regard. However, please do not hesitate to contact me before then if you so wish.



### **Sponsorship programme**

The BWC sponsorship programme, which was established by the Seventh Review Conference and renewed by the Eighth Review Conference to support and increase the participation of States Parties in BWC meetings, plays an important role in widening participation in our intersessional programme. I therefore urge any States Parties in a position to do so to consider making voluntary contributions to this programme. The ISU will shortly circulate instructions on how to apply for sponsorship under the programme in 2018.

### **Universalization**

The Seventh and Eighth Review Conferences mandated the Chair of the Meeting of States Parties to coordinate universalization activities. Seventeen States remain outside our Convention. I will be working with the other office-holders, the Depositary Governments, the ISU and States Parties on a range of activities to engage with States not party. I encourage all States Parties to renew their own efforts to encourage others to join the Convention, especially in their own geographic regions, using all appropriate bilateral, regional and multilateral channels. I would be grateful if you would keep me and the ISU informed of your contacts and any feedback received.

### **Financial Issues**

Permanent Missions should all have received the invoices for the 2018 BWC budget last month. If not, please contact the ISU to provide you with electronic copies of the invoices. I would like to take this opportunity to strongly urge all States Parties to pay their 2018 contributions, and any outstanding contributions from earlier years, as soon as possible. Sufficient funds need to be available in advance in order for the activities mandated by the Eighth Review Conference and the 2017 MSP to be implemented as intended.

### **Confidence-Building Measures**

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you that the Eighth Review Conference called upon all States Parties to submit Confidence-Building Measures (CBM) reports annually. The deadline for submission of CBMs covering calendar year 2017 is 15 April 2018. Please contact the ISU if you need any advice or assistance with submission of your CBMs.

Our work this year will be a collaborative process and I therefore rely on your advice and support. I aim to conduct business in an open, inclusive and transparent manner. I therefore welcome all ideas and feedback you may have on any aspect of our work. I can be contacted by e-mail at [ljupco.gjorgjinski@mfa.gov.mk](mailto:ljupco.gjorgjinski@mfa.gov.mk), or else through the ISU or the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Macedonia in Geneva.

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I look forward to working closely with you in pursuit of our shared objective of strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention. We have a unique opportunity this year to continue constructively towards this objective. Lets use this opportunity and end this year with the same sense of common purpose we begun it with.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Lj. GJORGJINSKI".

Ljupčo Jivan Gjorgjinski

Minister Counselor and *Chargé d'Affaires*

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Macedonia in Geneva

Chair of the 2018 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention