
**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**

19 July 2016

English only

Preparatory Committee
Geneva, 26-27 April and 8-12 August 2016
Item 5 of the agenda
General exchange of views

**Strengthening the BWC science and technology review
process: Considerations regarding the composition of an
S&T review body**

Submitted by Switzerland

Background

1. In an effort to help foster consensus on the establishment of a systematic and dedicated science and technology (S&T) review process in the framework of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) and assist in our collective preparations for the Eighth Review Conference, Switzerland has identified parameters and considerations, each with a set of options, which it believes would shape any arrangement for reviewing S&T developments relevant to the Convention. These are contained in Switzerland's working paper entitled *Strengthening the BWC Science and Technology Review Process* that it submitted to the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee held in April 2016 (BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.8).¹

¹ In its working paper submitted to the Meeting of Experts 2015 (BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.11), Switzerland laid out the rationale for a dedicated process to review relevant developments in science and technology. This was followed by the working paper submitted to the Meeting of States Parties 2015 that reviews how different international processes deal with these issues (BWC/MSP/2015/WP.10).



2. Building upon the suggestion of the President-designate of the Eighth Review Conference to work together informally on specific proposals, Switzerland invited States Parties to provide written feedback on its working papers as well as those submitted by other States Parties on the issue² of an S&T review process under the Convention in order to take this matter forward and ensure that all views are taken into account.

3. Switzerland is grateful to those States Parties that have provided feedback as well as to those that elaborated and propose concrete review models. These contributions are very useful and important for identifying common ground and move towards a shared view.

Areas of convergence and key differences

4. The replies received indicate that there are commonalities of views on many elements. The fact that the issue of S&T review pertains to all articles of the Convention and has therefore to be addressed in an overarching manner is widely shared. Based on the feedback received and the proposals submitted by States Parties, it seems clear that any type of S&T review process has to be responsive to the needs of States Parties and be fully under their control, even though further work is still required to establish the precise modalities and interaction procedures. There are commonalities of views or a considerable degree of flexibility with regard to the issues of input, reporting, coordination and scope as presented in our working paper mentioned in the introductory paragraph.

5. One particular area where further convergence will be required concerns the question of **group composition**, and to a lesser degree the interconnected issue of participation funding. States Parties have underlined the need for any S&T review process to be diverse and representative as well inclusive. They have proposed different options in order to meet these requirements.

6. In order to provide an overview of the respective options brought forward by States Parties so far, as well as to facilitate this debate and explore avenues for convergence, Switzerland compiled the proposals in the table below.

² BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.2/Rev.1 - Strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention Proposal for the establishment of a Scientific Advisory Committee - Submitted by the Russian Federation; BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.3 - Science and technology review for the BWC: Features of an effective process - Submitted by the United States of America; BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.4 - A future science and technology review process - Submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.7 - Elements on science and technology for the 2016 Review Conference - the importance of an active review process - Submitted by Finland, Norway and Sweden.

Options for group composition

<i>Option 1</i>	<i>Option 2</i>	<i>Option 3</i>	<i>Option 4</i>	<i>Option 5</i>
Open to all States Parties that nominate scientific experts	Open to all States Parties that nominate max. 1 - 2 (to be determined) scientific experts	Half (to be determined) of the States Parties of each regional group (participating states to be decided by consensus in each regional group) nominate 1 scientific expert each	Open to all States Parties that nominate max. 1 - 2 (to be determined) scientific experts allocated to a certain number of sub-working groups focusing on specific topics (to be determined)	20 - 25 (to be determined) scientific experts appointed by the regional groups (to be decided by consensus in each regional group / ratio between the regional groups to be determined)

Capacity to invite outside expertise

Hybrid model based on a combination of different options

7. In any case, S&T review debates should be organised and structured in a way that ensures that discussions are technical, that the conclusions reached are factual, and that any recommendations made have a scientific basis. That would leave BWC States Parties well placed for the resulting policy discussions in the framework of the broader intersessional work programme.

8. It seems clear that the proceedings of any type of S&T review would be covered by assessed contributions. These would cover costs such as printing of documents, interpretation if any, administrative and Implementation Support Unit (ISU) support, etc. Regarding the specific issue of participation, several **funding** options were put forward and are broadly summarised in the table below.

Options for funding of participation

<i>Option 1</i>	<i>Option 2</i>	<i>Option 3</i>	<i>Option 4</i>
States Parties fund the experts they nominate	A voluntary trust fund is established to sponsor the participation of experts from developing countries	An official sponsorship programme is established based on assessed contributions to fund the participation of experts from developing countries	Participation of all experts is financed by assessed contributions NB: This option probably only applies in the case of a limited group size

Hybrid model based on a combination of different options

Way forward

9. Switzerland would like to reiterate that whatever is agreed by States Parties with respect to S&T review should be flexible enough to accommodate other decisions, particularly those with respect to any type of future intersessional process.

10. In preparation of the second meeting of the Preparatory Committee to be held in August 2016, Switzerland suggests to add S&T review to the list of topics of overarching relevance to the BWC that does not pertain to a particular article but to all operational articles of the Convention.

11. Furthermore, Switzerland believes that there would be value in an ongoing, broadly supported consultation process in place on the issue of S&T review in order to exchange views, discuss divergences, and explore and identify possible avenues for convergence between now and the Review Conference. In this context, Switzerland takes note that the President-designate indicated in his letter, dated 25 May 2016, that he is considering nominating Friends of the Chair for particular topics and believes that nominating such a Friend for the issue of S&T review would be beneficial in taking this matter forward.

12. A shared view on these parameters and considerations will enable States Parties to identify what models and approaches would take them into account, and what a more effective and sustainable process would look like. This will enable the Review Conference to agree on a suitable, standing arrangement – supported by adequate resources – for a timely, sustained and systematic review of S&T developments.
