

**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**

Geneva, 7-25 November 2016

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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

6 October 2016

Excellency,

I am writing once more in my capacity as President-Designate of the Eighth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), to provide a further update on preparations for the Conference, which is now only weeks away.

I would like to begin by thanking you for your continuing support and active engagement in the preparations. A record number of working papers were submitted to the Preparatory Committee which concluded the formal preparations for the Review Conference successfully in August. In the weeks since then, there has been a busy schedule of informal workshops around the world. I am grateful to the States Parties and international organizations that have supported these meetings, and I am pleased that the atmosphere remains positive as we approach the Eighth Review Conference.

### **Facilitators**

As I announced at the Preparatory Committee, it has been my intention to ask individuals to serve as facilitators on specific issues in order to help me in my role as President-Designate of the Review Conference. I have now secured agreement from several individuals to serve in this capacity. In the spirit of openness transparency and inclusivity, I would like to inform you about the facilitators and the areas on which I have asked them to work:

- Solemn declaration: Ambassador Boudjemâa Delmi (Algeria)
- Assistance and cooperation: Zahid Rastam (Malaysia)
- Science and technology: Laurent Masméjean (Switzerland)
- National implementation: Ambassador Michael Biontino (Germany)
- Article VII: Ambassador Alice Guitton (France)
- Future intersessional work programme and the ISU: Ambassador Tehmina Janjua (Pakistan) and Ian McConville (Australia)

I recognise that time is short before the Review Conference, and also that many individuals are in New York for the First Committee where they are very busy on other issues. Therefore, I do not anticipate that the facilitators will be conducting extensive informal consultations on

these topics prior to the Review Conference. However, where possible and appropriate I encourage them to discuss these topics with delegations, and for delegations to approach them in relation to these issues.

I wish to underscore that the goal of such early outreach is not to begin crafting language on difficult issues or proposing compromises. These are tasks that will require broader participation and are best addressed at the Review Conference. Rather, I expect each facilitator to engage with delegations and seek to understand the priorities and concerns relating to each of the topics, in order to be best prepared to facilitate our work once the Review Conference begins. I would also like to re-emphasize the overriding importance of openness, inclusivity and transparency in this process. I have stressed this aspect to the individuals listed above.

I also wish to note that this list of facilitators is not necessarily exhaustive. During the course of the Review Conference, it is possible that other issues will emerge on which there is a need for focused consultation. In such a case, after appropriate consultation, I may choose to designate additional facilitators when I judge that this is the best way to advance our work.

### **Programme of work**

In order to facilitate your preparations, I have prepared the attached draft provisional indicative programme of work for the Conference. This draft will be processed and issued as an official document, ready for adoption at our opening session on 7 November. I stress, however, that the programme is both *provisional* and *indicative*, and I intend to treat it as a rolling schedule in order to retain the flexibility to manage our work in the most efficient manner once the Review Conference begins.

The programme outlines the development of the work of the Conference following very much the traditional approach from previous Review Conferences. It starts with the general debate, then moves through the Committee of the Whole and informal plenaries that will deal with the main substantive issues, before finishing with the Drafting Committee and the preparation and adoption of the final document.

Given that a large number of States Parties are expected to take part in the general debate, I kindly request that statements be kept to a limited duration, ideally five minutes, and not exceeding a maximum of seven minutes when speaking in a national capacity and ten/fifteen minutes when speaking on behalf of group of countries. This will allow the general debate to be completed on time and allow us to commence the substantive work of the Conference as soon as possible.

I would also like to encourage delegations to table their proposals for the Review Conference as early as possible but not later than the end of the first week of the meeting, so that we can all consider them and how they may fit into the final outcome document to be adopted at the end of the Conference.

The programme envisages that the Committee of the Whole will conduct the article-by-article review of the Convention, developing the text of the final declaration, while informal plenaries will work on the cross-cutting issues for which specific decisions will be recorded in the forward-looking section of the final document (for example, international cooperation and assistance, science and technology, a future intersessional process, etc.). There will inevitably be some overlap between the Committee of the Whole and the informal plenaries,

but this is natural as observations from the backward-looking article-by-article review should of course inform the decisions taken with respect to the forward-looking agenda.

### **Financial issues**

As I have mentioned in previous letters, there are a number of financial issues that have been raised by States Parties and by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo. These issues include, *inter alia*, outstanding contributions to the BWC and new accounting systems being introduced within the United Nations. In this respect, I believe that it would be useful for the Review Conference to receive a briefing on the financial situation and the new systems from the Financial Resources Management Service of the United Nations Office at Geneva. I would therefore like to propose the addition of a new sub-item to the provisional agenda of the Review Conference, namely a sub-item on “financial issues” under agenda item 13 on “other matters”. I intend to make this proposal when we adopt the agenda of the Review Conference under item 3 of the provisional agenda. Furthermore, I would also propose that we consider this new sub-item, if approved, during the first week of the Review Conference in order that we have time to reflect upon the issues raised.

### **Registration and credentials**

I would like to take this opportunity to remind delegations to register their participation in the Review Conference, according to the procedure outlined on the BWC website: [www.unog.ch/bwc/rc8](http://www.unog.ch/bwc/rc8) I also remind delegations of the need to submit formal credentials, signed by the head of state or government, or minister for foreign affairs. Credentials should be addressed to Mr. Daniel Feakes, Chief of the Implementation Support Unit, no later than 28 October. The ISU sent out detailed information regarding registration and credentials, as well as other practical arrangements, on 23 September.

### **Preparatory documents**

A total of 39 working papers were submitted to the Preparatory Committee, and additional working papers are now being submitted to the ISU for the Review Conference. In addition, the ISU submitted five background information documents and a report on the operation of the ISU from 2012-16. The ISU is currently preparing updated versions of three of these documents. In addition, the ISU is also preparing the compilations of national inputs on compliance with the provisions of the BWC, the implementation of Article VII and the implementation of Article X. These documents will be posted on the BWC website prior to the Review Conference. Furthermore, the presentations from the series of informal workshops that have taken place in recent months are also available on the website, or will be shortly. As new documents are added to the website, the ISU will inform delegations electronically.

### **Regional group consultations**

I plan to be in Geneva for the days prior to the opening of the Review Conference on 7 November. I will be available for informal consultations with any interested delegations and I have proposed to the regional group coordinators that I could brief the regional groups on preparations for the Review Conference on 4 November. At these briefings I can update delegations on the status of preparations for the Review Conference and we can discuss the programme of work and any last-minute queries or issues. For those of you travelling to New York for the First Committee, I will be available for informal consultations there, and I

encourage you to contact me without delay if there is any matter you would like to discuss before the Review Conference.

### **Conclusion**

We have all worked hard this year to prepare for the Review Conference, and it is heartening to see the continuation of the positive atmosphere that was apparent at the Preparatory Committee. I would encourage you now to make the most of the few weeks remaining before the start of the Review Conference to read the various background documents and working papers, to discuss them with other delegations, and to consider how best we can work to ensure that the Review Conference makes a significant and sustainable contribution to improving the implementation of the BWC. I look forward to working with you all at the Review Conference to this end.

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



Ambassador Dr György Molnár  
Special Representative for Arms Control,  
Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of  
Hungary  
President-Designate of the Eighth Review  
Conference

Attachment: Draft provisional programme of work

## Draft provisional programme of work

Submitted by the President-designate

### Week one (7-11 November)

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	<i>Monday 7 Nov</i>	<i>Tuesday 8 Nov</i>	<i>Wednesday 9 Nov</i>	<i>Thursday 10 Nov</i>	<i>Friday 11 Nov</i>
AM	Opening formalities (agenda items 1-9)  General debate (agenda item 10 (a))	General debate	Committee of the Whole	Committee of the Whole	Committee of the Whole
PM	General debate	General debate  (informal session for NGO statements)	Committee of the Whole	Committee of the Whole	Plenary: progress review  Informal plenary

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## Week two (14–18 November)

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	<i>Monday 14 Nov</i>	<i>Tuesday 15 Nov</i>	<i>Wednesday 16 Nov</i>	<i>Thursday 17 Nov</i>	<i>Friday 18 Nov</i>
AM	Committee of the Whole	Informal plenary (agenda items 11-13)	Informal plenary (agenda items 11-13)	Plenary: agenda item 14: Report of the Committee of the Whole	Drafting Committee
PM	Informal plenary (agenda items 11-13)	Informal plenary (agenda items 11-13)	Committee of the Whole (consideration of the Committee's report)	Drafting Committee	Plenary to review progress

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## Week three (21–25 November)

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	<i>Monday 21 Nov</i>	<i>Tuesday 22 Nov</i>	<i>Wednesday 23 Nov</i>	<i>Thursday 24 Nov</i>	<i>Friday 25 Nov</i>
AM	Drafting Committee (consideration of the Committee's report)	Informal consultations (final document)	Informal consultations (final document)	(Additional meeting if required)	(Additional meeting if required)
PM	Informal consultations (final document)	Plenary: agenda item 15: Report of the Drafting Committee	Plenary: agenda item 16: Preparation and adoption of the final document	(Additional meeting if required)	(Additional meeting if required)
			Closing formalities		

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