Biological Weapons Convention
Meetings of Experts
29 July – 8 August 2019

United Nations Office at Geneva
Palais des Nations
Geneva, Switzerland
Information for participants from States Parties, Signatory States, Observer States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations

1. The States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) agreed at the 2017 Meeting of States Parties that five Meetings of Experts will be held back to back at least three months before the annual Meeting of States Parties. In 2019, the Meetings of Experts will take place on the following dates:

- 29 July to 30 July 2019: MX1 - Cooperation and Assistance, with a Particular Focus on Strengthening Cooperation and Assistance under Article X
- 31 July and 2 August 2019: MX2 - Review of Developments in the Field of Science and Technology Related to the Convention
- 5 August 2019: MX3 - Strengthening National Implementation
- 6 to 7 August 2019: MX4 - Assistance, Response and Preparedness
- 8 August 2019: MX5 - Institutional Strengthening of the Convention

2. States Parties further agreed that in 2019, MX1 and MX2 will be chaired by the Eastern European Group, MX3 and MX4 by the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States (NAM), and MX 5 by the Western Group.

- MX1 will be chaired by Ambassador Victor Dolidze of Georgia
- MX2 will be chaired by Mr. Yury Nikolaichik of Belarus
- MX3 will be chaired by Ms. Melanie Reddiar of South Africa
- MX4 will be chaired by Mr. Usman Iqbal Jadoon of Pakistan
- MX5 will be chaired by Mr. Laurent Masmejean of Switzerland

3. The present Aide-Mémoire has been prepared by the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and provides preliminary information for participants of the Meetings of Experts. Documentation and other information will be posted, as it becomes available, on the BWC website.

Date and Venue

4. The Meetings of Experts will be held from Monday 29 July to Friday 2 August 2019 in conference room XX, and from Monday 5 to Thursday 8 August 2019 in the Assembly Hall of the Palais des Nations, United Nations Office at Geneva, Avenue de la Paix 8-14, 1211 Geneva 10, accessible via the Pregny Gate. Thursday 1 August 2019 will be Swiss National Day, and the United Nations office in Geneva will therefore be closed.

5. The first Meeting of Experts, MX1, will begin on Monday 29 July 2019 at 10:00.

Registration

6. All participants in the Meetings of Experts need to be registered in accordance with the procedures described below in paragraphs 7 to 11 depending on their status and affiliation.
Those participants not already in possession of a security badge to access the Palais des Nations need to additionally complete the process described below in paragraphs 14 to 18.

7. **States Parties and Signatory States** wishing to participate should send, through their Permanent Missions, a letter or *note verbale* to the ISU notifying the full names and titles of the members of the delegation. The head of delegation should be clearly indicated. Only the names of participants listed in the letter or *note verbale* will be included in the official list of participants of the Meetings of Experts. Formal credentials are not required for the Meetings of Experts.

8. **States which are neither parties nor signatories to the Convention** may apply to participate in the Meetings of Experts as observers. A letter or *note verbale* should be addressed, through their Permanent Missions, to the ISU applying for observer status and listing the full names and titles of the members of the delegation. The head of delegation should be clearly indicated. Only the names of participants listed in the letter or *note verbale* will be included in the official list of participants of the Meetings of Experts.

9. **International organizations** may apply to participate in the Meetings of Experts as observer agencies. A letter or *note verbale* should be addressed to the ISU applying for observer agency status, listing the full names and titles of the members of the delegation. The head of delegation should be clearly indicated. Only the names of participants listed in the letter or *note verbale* will be included in the official list of participants of the Meetings of Experts.

10. **NGOs and academic institutions** may register to attend public sessions of the Meetings of Experts. A letter on the official letterhead of the organization should be addressed to the ISU applying for attendance of the public sessions of the Meeting and listing the full names and titles of the representatives who will attend. NGOs and academic institutions that have not previously attended a BWC meeting should indicate previous interactions between the organization and the United Nations in relation to disarmament and non-proliferation issues. A mission statement or summary of work of the organization should be provided. Only the names of participants listed in the letter will be included in the official list of participants of the Meetings of Experts.

11. *Note verbales* and letters should be submitted no later than **Friday 19 July 2019**.

**Access to the Palais des Nations**

12. Valid grounds passes (issued either by the United Nations Office at Geneva or the United Nations Headquarters in New York) are required for entry into the Palais des Nations.

13. Participants already possessing a United Nations grounds pass may proceed directly to the meeting room (Room XX during the first week and the Assembly Hall during the second week).
14. Participants who do not already have a United Nations grounds pass need to register online and follow the process described. Participants who have already registered for a previous meeting at the United Nations Office at Geneva, can simply log in to their existing account and register for the Meetings of Experts. Participants registering for the first time will need to provide details of their passport or national identification card and upload a passport-quality photo. All participants will also need to upload a copy of the note verbale or letter from their delegation. If the requested documents are not attached, the system will reject the application. For any queries, please contact the Implementation Support Unit at bwc@un.org.

15. Once the application has been approved, you will receive via e-mail a UN Event Pass. Grounds passes valid for the duration of the Meetings of Experts will be available for collection from the Pass and Identification Unit at the Pregny Gate of the Palais des Nations. Participants are advised to come to the Pregny Gate well in advance to allow enough time for security checks.

16. Delegations from States and international organisations can collect their passes as from 12:00 on Friday 26 July 2019. Please bring a copy of the delegations’ letter or note verbale or the UN Event Pass received after your successful registration, in order to speed up the process.

17. NGO representatives can collect their badges in person from 08:00 on Monday 29 July 2019. A valid passport or national identification card will have to be produced along with the UN Event Pass. Only representatives who have registered online and whose names have been properly included in the letter described above will be granted an access badge.

18. For security reasons, the identification badge must be worn and visible to UN Security staff at all times while inside the Palais des Nations.

Getting to and from the Palais des Nations

19. The map below shows the main conference rooms, entrances and facilities within the Palais des Nations. It also shows the nearest bus and tram stops outside the Palais. A more detailed version of the map is also available.
Accessibility to the Palais des Nations for persons with disabilities

20. To facilitate access to the premises for persons with disabilities, UNOG’s Security and Safety Service has implemented a standard procedure whereby priority access is automatically provided upon arrival at Pregny Gate. It is important to remember that external delegates, visitors and others can only access the Palais premises through Pregny Gate.

21. After passing through the priority lane, Security Officers at Pregny Gate will issue a special badge for persons with disabilities, which allows them to open the dedicated accessible door next to the elevator on the side of the Gate. While guiding the visitors to the next accessible elevator and explaining how to get around, the Security Officers will also provide the visitors with a map of the Palais, which clearly indicates accessible doors, elevators and restrooms.

22. When leaving the premises, visitors are instructed to return the special badge to Security. Visitors are also informed that if they leave after 19:30, they will have to leave the premises using the ramp and call for assistance (a telephone is available at the top of the ramp).

Public transport

23. Upon arrival at Geneva airport, a free eighty-minute ticket for train, tram and bus travel within the Geneva area can be collected from the machine in the baggage reclaim hall. Many hotels in Geneva provide guests with free public transport passes for the duration of their stay.

24. The Palais des Nations is served by several tram and bus lines: Buses 8, 28, F, V and Z serve Pregny Gate (Appia stop) where the Pass and Identification Unit is located. Trams 13 and 15, as well as buses 5, 8, 11, 14, 28, V, F, and Z serve the Nations stop. The Place des Nations, where the Nations Gate is located, is some 500 meters away from the Pregny Gate.
Bus 28 serves Geneva Cointrin Airport from the Nations and the Appia stops at the Pregny Gate and Bus 5 serves the airport from the Nations stop.

25. Further information such as itineraries, timetables, fares, etc. can be found on the website of the Transports Publics Genevois (see: www.tpg.ch).

Taxis

26. A taxi stand is located on Route de Pregny, some 25 metres from the Pregny Gate, in the direction of Place des Nations. Direct telephone number: +41 (0) 22 331 4133. Taxis are usually available around the clock.

Parking

27. Delegates wishing to park on the premises should request authorization in advance through their Permanent Mission in Geneva. The UN Security and Safety Service at Pregny Gate will issue the parking authorization at the same time as the delegate’s identification badge.

Hotel accommodation and visas

28. The ISU cannot offer financial or logistical support to assist with travel to, accommodation during, or other costs related to attending or contributing to the Meetings of Experts, except for experts who may be selected under the BWC Sponsorship Programme.

29. It is the responsibility of States or NGO representatives to make their own arrangements for visas, travel and related costs. Further information relating to the procedures and measures concerning the issuance of visas for Switzerland is available by contacting the Swiss embassy or consulate in the applicant's country of residence or by referring to the website of the Swiss Federal Office for Migration. Further information is available on the website of the Permanent Mission of Switzerland.

Attending the Meetings of Experts

30. All formal sessions of the Meetings of Experts (including the public sessions) will be held in Room XX and in the Assembly Hall, located at the Palais des Nations (see map above).

31. Side-events will be held in Rooms VIII (A-building), XI (A-building), XXII (E-building) and XXIII (E-building). Details of the meetings scheduled for each day can be found on the screens opposite Door 40 in the E Building.

32. Private meetings for regional groups or other groups of States Parties may be held during the Meetings of Experts. The Secretariat will assist the Coordinators of the different groups with the announcements for such meetings and participants are kindly invited to check the notice boards regularly and/or the BWC website for additional details.
33. An up-to-date timetable of events, including formal meetings, side events and informal sessions will be available on the 2019 Meetings of Experts page of the BWC website.

34. Electronic boards outside each meeting room will clearly indicate whether the session in progress is public or private. All interested parties can attend public sessions. Private meetings are for States Parties only.

35. Food and drinks are strictly prohibited in the conference rooms. Activities involving food and drinks are allowed only in the areas designated for this purpose. Catering services should be contacted directly by side-event organizers at onu@eldora.ch, telephone number 022 917 5619.

Rooms and facilities for participants

36. In addition to the main meeting rooms (Room XX and the Assembly Hall), a smaller meeting room nearby has been reserved for use by States Parties for private consultations. Room requests will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis but every effort will always be made to accommodate requests from States Parties. Those interested in reserving rooms should contact the ISU during the meeting.

37. Computer terminals are available near the Serpent Bar behind the conference room. Free wifi access is available in the meeting rooms and generally throughout the Palais des Nations.

38. Conference rooms can be made available to NGOs when they are not in use by States Parties. NGOs may also make use of the computing facilities available near the Serpent Bar and at the Cyberspace area of the UNOG library (Door 20, B Building, see map above).

39. Photocopying facilities will not be available to participants.

40. A limited number of conference participants are also able to leave large luggage with security at the Pregny Gate. After being cleared by Security, baggage can be stored in special lockers. The Security Service has noticed that during busy periods, such as on the last day of a meeting, numerous delegates bring their luggage with them to the Palais des Nations after having checked out of their hotel. The Security Service wishes to remind all delegates that once the limited storage capacity is exhausted, no additional luggage will be accepted.

41. For security reasons, luggage and other belongings from participants cannot be stored in the offices of the ISU. The ISU will authorize removal of materials judged to be inappropriate.

42. Participants can also make use of the various cafes, cafeterias and restaurants in the Palais des Nations. The closest is the Serpent Bar which can be found behind Room XVIII on the first floor of the E Building. Other facilities in the E Building which might be of interest include the UNOG Bookshop (Door 41, second floor) and the UBS bank (Door 41, second floor).

43. A Post Office and another UBS bank are located at Door 6, C Building (see map) and SAFI (a small general shop) at Door 1, S Building (see map).
Documentation

44. Prior to the Meetings of Experts, pre-session documents will be made available on the BWC website.

45. States Parties wishing to submit working papers for the Meetings of Experts should provide Microsoft Word versions to the ISU as soon as possible on bwc@un.org. Please get in touch to discuss your specific requirements.

46. States and international organizations granted observer status might also wish to provide information to delegations at the Meetings of Experts. Documents should be submitted in electronic and hard copy to the ISU. Electronic copies should be sent to bwc@un.org.

Secretariat

47. Further enquiries regarding attendance and participation in the Meetings of Experts should be addressed to:

   BWC Implementation Support Unit
   United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
   United Nations Office at Geneva
   Palais des Nations
   CH-1211 Geneva 10
   Switzerland

   Email: bwc@un.org

48. Additional information, including documents related to the Meetings of Experts, will be posted on the BWC website, prior to, during and after the meeting.