Summary

This report describes the activities of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) in 2014 to implement the mandate given to it by the Sixth and Seventh Review Conferences to support States Parties in the administration and comprehensive implementation of the Convention, to promote universalization of the Convention, to facilitate the exchange of Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs), to establish and administer the assistance database, and to administer the sponsorship programme. The Seventh Review Conference decided that the Unit “will submit a concise annual written report to all States Parties on its activities to implement its mandate” (BWC/CONF.VII/7, Part III, paragraph 36).

I. Introduction

1. In 2014, the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) operated in accordance with the decisions and recommendations of the Seventh Review Conference (BWC/CONF.VII/7, part III), which renewed for the period from 2012 to 2016 the mandate of the Unit originally decided by the Sixth Review Conference. The renewed mandate includes, mutatis mutandis, all the tasks of the original mandate, and adds the specific tasks of establishing and administering the database for assistance requests and offers and of administering the sponsorship programme, as well as the general requirement to support, as appropriate, the implementation by the States Parties of the decisions and recommendations of the Seventh Review Conference.

2. The ISU is funded by the States Parties to the Convention as part of the costs for the 2012–2015 intersessional programme, which the Seventh Review Conference decided would be "shared by all States Parties to the Convention, based on the United Nations scale of assessment pro-rated to take into account differences in membership between the Convention and the United Nations". The budget for the ISU in 2014 can be found in the
cost estimates approved by the Seventh Review Conference, BWC/CONF.VII/4/Rev.1. The ISU is located in the Geneva Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, which supports the ISU through a range of services which includes financial, logistical, administrative and personnel management. The Branch also facilitates the ISU’s compliance with United Nations rules and regulations so as to enhance its effective functioning. The Branch is instrumental in coordinating and liaising with UNOG relevant services that support the organization of BWC meetings and conferences.

3. During 2014, the ISU received voluntary funding of AUD 16,397 from Australia, in support of the BWC sponsorship programme (see section VII for details). As of 15 October 2014, the ISU has been contacted by three States Parties wishing to make a voluntary contribution. The contributions have yet to be confirmed and initiated.

4. The ISU has three staff. The changes to ISU staffing in the course of 2014 are listed below:
   - Mr. Richard Lennane, Chief of Unit from 1 January until 28 February 2014;
   - Mr. Piers Millett, Political Affairs Officer, Deputy to the Chief of Unit from 1 January to 28 June 2014; Acting Chief of Unit from 1 March until 14 May 2014.
   - Ms. Ngoc Phuong van der Blij, Associate Political Affairs Officer from 1 January until 30 June 2014, and from 1 July until 31 December 2014 as Political Affairs Officer on temporary assignment and Deputy Secretary of the 2014 BWC meetings.
   - Ms. Gabriele Kraatz-Wadsack, Chief, Regional Disarmament Branch, Office for Disarmament Affairs, New York, following a silence procedure, has performed the duties of temporary Chief of Unit for a six month period since 15 May 2014 and was the Secretary of the 2014 BWC Meetings.

5. Staff capacity was reduced several times in the course of 2014, due to the departure of two staff members. In 2014, the ISU was assisted by interns: from March to August by Mr. Philippe Mauger and from May to September by Ms. Maria Svindseth. From September to December, Ms. Tatyana Novossiolova will assist the ISU. Furthermore, from 7 July to 15 August 2014, Ms. Katherine Prizeman, Associate Political Affairs Officer, from the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs New York, assisted in the preparations for and in the Meeting of Experts. Ms. Prizeman will again assist from 24 November to 9 December for the Meeting of States Parties.

6. Two positions at the Office for Disarmament Affairs are funded through the European Union Council Decision 2012/421/CFS of 23 July 2012 in support of the Biological Weapons Convention (known as the European Union funded Action in support of the Convention). In 2014, these two positions are held since 1 January until 31 December 2014 by Ms. Karin Hjalmarsson, Political Affairs Officer and by different Programme Assistants. The objectives of the EU BWC Action projects are to promote the universality and implementation of the Convention, and to support the work of the current intersessional programme.

7. This report contains sections devoted to each of the main elements of the ISU mandate, as well as three annexes (in English only):
   - Annex I: Meetings and events attended by the Implementation Support Unit;
   - Annex II: National Points of Contact; and
   - Annex III: Participation in the Confidence-Building Measures.
II. Administrative support for the Convention

8. The ISU forms the substantive Secretariat for the 2014 meetings of the intersessional programme, servicing the Meeting of Experts and Meeting of States Parties and supporting the activities of the Chairman and Vice-chairs. The Unit continued to undertake a broad range of administrative functions as described in past reports.

9. The ISU continued to develop the BWC website (http://www.unog.ch/bwc) to increase its utility not only for States Parties, but also for outreach, awareness-raising and communication to a global audience. In 2014, the ISU significantly restructured and added material to the website to make it easier to access information.

10. The Unit maintained and further developed the restricted area for States Parties of the BWC website (http://www.unog.ch/bwc/restricted). The contents of this section of the website have been described in past reports.

11. The ISU maintained regular contact with many scientific, professional and academic institutions as well as industry and non-governmental organisations. These contacts have provided insight and information that assisted the ISU in supporting the efforts of States Parties, including in the preparation of background information documents.

12. The ISU maintained regular contact with a wide range of international organizations relevant to the Convention, including all those detailed in past reports. The ISU, in activities fully consistent with its mandate, remains an active participant in regular processes, outreach and implementation efforts undertaken by these organizations.

13. The ISU maintained contact with the regional organizations detailed in past reports. The Unit has also begun to work more closely with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the World Customs Organization (WCO).

III. Implementation of the Convention

14. The ISU continued to collect details of national points of contact for the Convention (see annex II). As of 21 October 2014, 90 States Parties had nominated a national point of contact as requested by the Sixth and Seventh Review Conferences. Three signatory States, two States not party and one regional organization have also provided points of contact.

15. Participation in workshops and seminars play a crucial role in raising awareness of the Convention and its implementation, both for national governments and other relevant actors such as international and regional organizations, the scientific community, professional associations, academia and the private sector. The ISU accepted select invitations to participate in a range of meetings and events throughout the year. Additionally, the ISU co-hosted or otherwise supported the planning and organisation of several meetings and events directly related to improving implementation of the Convention, including those forming part of the EU funded Action in support of the BWC. The ISU undertook 14 missions between January and October 2014. Due to the ISU staffing situation, many invitations to participate in meetings or other events have been declined.

IV. Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs)

16. In accordance with the decisions of the Sixth and Seventh Review Conferences, the ISU supports the exchange of confidence-building measures (CBM). The ISU maintains electronic versions of the CBM forms on the BWC website in all official languages. Annex
III lists the 2014 submissions (covering the 2013 calendar year) and includes a breakdown by each CBM form.

17. All the 2014 CBM returns are available to States Parties in the restricted area of the website (http://www.unog.ch/bwc/restricted). Twenty-three States Parties have requested that their CBM submissions are also made available in the public area of the website (http://www.unog.ch/bwc/cbms).

18. In accordance with the decision of the Sixth Review Conference, on 15 January 2014, the Chief, Implementation Support Unit, wrote to the permanent missions and the national points of contact of the States Parties informing them of the deadline (15 April) for the annual CBM submission. In accordance with paragraph 45 of the 2013 Report of the Meeting of States Parties (BWC/MSP/2013/5), the Chairman of the 2014 Meeting of States Parties also included CBM reminders in his correspondence with States Parties.

19. As of 15 September 2014:
   (a) 67 States Parties (39.4 per cent of States Parties) had submitted a CBM covering the calendar year 2013.
   (b) Of these, 37 submitted their CBM on or before the deadline of 15 April 2014.
   (c) One State Party submitted a CBM for the first time.
   (d) Eight States Parties which submitted a CBM in 2013 had not yet done so in 2014.
   (e) 52 States Parties have never submitted a CBM.

20. In accordance with the specific request of the Seventh Review Conference, the ISU and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, in collaboration with interested States Parties and with support provided under EU Council Decision 2012/421/CFSP in support of the Convention, continued to examine possibilities for developing a method to complete and submit CBMs over the Internet. A phased plan has been developed. An electronic platform for completing and submitting the forms has been developed by the Information and Communication Technology Service of the United Nations Office at Geneva, and has been tested by a group of States Parties (Belgium, Malaysia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America) and is available on the restricted area of the website (http://www.unog.ch/bwc/restricted). It is expected that a beta-version of this tool will be available early in 2015. Discussions have already begun to ensure that existing tools developed by States Parties for their national use will be compatible with this system.

21. A second phase is planned to add search, comparison and basic analytical tools. Additional financial resources are being sought to support this second phase.

V. Promotion of universalization

22. The ISU supported the Chairman and Vice-chairs in their activities to promote universalization, preparing correspondence and briefing material, and helping to organise outreach events. The ISU also provided information and advice to States Parties conducting their own outreach activities to promote universalization.

23. The ISU provided information and advice on the Convention to several signatories and States not party. The ISU also promoted universalization during the seminars and events in which it participated, at which representatives of States not parties were present (see annex I). As it became available, the Unit consolidated and published information on progress towards universality in the restricted area of the ISU website.
24. Further details on these activities, and the results to date, can be found in the Report of the Chairman on Universalization Activities (BWC/MSP/2014/XX).

VI. Database for assistance requests and offers

25. The Seventh Review Conference decided to establish a database system to facilitate requests for and offers of exchange of assistance and cooperation among States Parties (BWC/CONF.VII/7, part III, paragraphs 17–20). The Conference mandated the ISU to establish and administer the database; to facilitate, on request, the exchange of information among States Parties relating to the database and any resulting cooperation and assistance activities; and to report to States Parties on the operation of the database detailing the offers made, requests sought and matches made during a calendar year.

26. The ISU has continued to maintain a provisional version of the database, which is accessible to States Parties on the restricted-access area of the ISU website (http://www.unog.ch/bwc/restricted). Additional resources are sought for further development.

27. As of 15 October 2014, the database contains:

   (a) 27 offers for assistance, from five States Parties and one group of States Parties;

   (b) Two requests for assistance, from two States Parties; and one update of a request of assistance.

28. The ISU has been informed that one request for assistance in the database has been partially met, and the Unit will continue to support the requesting country in locating further assistance.

29. The ISU has also maintained regular contact with relevant assistance providers in other settings. For example, the ISU continued to work closely with providers of assistance for related national legislation and enforcement measures such as the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC) and the Committee established pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004). The Unit has used opportunities provided by its participation in workshops and seminars (annex I) to promote the use of the database.

VII. Sponsorship programme

30. The ISU administered the sponsorship programme established by the Seventh Review Conference to "support and increase the participation of developing States Parties in the meetings of the intersessional programme" (BWC/CONF.VII/7, part III, paragraph 21). In the course of his communications with States Parties, the Chairman requested voluntary contributions for the sponsorship programme.

31. As of 15 October 2014, voluntary contributions to the sponsorship programme have been received from one State Party (Australia) and from the European Union. In addition, two States Parties have supported the sponsorship programme through bilateral arrangements (Germany and the United States of America).

32. Applications for sponsorship to participate in the 2014 BWC Meetings were received from 10 States Parties (Armenia, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Gabon, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Montenegro, Yemen, and Zambia), two
signatories (Myanmar and Nepal) and one State not party (Mauritania). In accordance with the decision of the Seventh Review Conference, the ISU allocated the available sponsorship resources in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-chairs of the Meeting of States Parties, giving priority to those States Parties which had previously not participated in the meetings, or had been unable to regularly send experts from capital, and giving consideration to participation of States not party in order to promote universalization of the Convention.

33. Two States Parties (Gabon, Lao People’s Democratic Republic), two Signatories (Haiti and Nepal) and one State not party (Mauritania) were sponsored to participate in the Meeting of Experts through the BWC sponsorship programme or through bilateral arrangements in support of the sponsorship programme. As of 15 October 2014, sponsorship arrangements for the Meeting of States Parties have yet to be confirmed and initiated.

VIII. Conclusions and future work

34. The decision of the Seventh Review Conference to mandate additional tasks to the Unit without increasing its resources continued to pose a challenge. The concerns raised in the 2011 ISU report to the Seventh Review Conference about the capacity of the ISU to respond to the requests of States Parties and the geographic distribution of ISU activity remain unresolved. Changes to ISU staffing during the first half of 2014 exacerbated these challenges and during most of 2014.

35. As the biennial agenda item remains the same for 2015, the ISU will continue to focus next year on developing and strengthening working relationships with relevant organizations, gathering details of existing capacities and updating the background information necessary for supporting States Parties in their efforts to consider how to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties.
Annex I

Meetings and events attended by the Implementation Support Unit

Representatives of the Implementation Support Unit participated, or are scheduled to participate, in the following 14 meetings and events in 2014:

A. Raising awareness of the Convention

1. On 9 January, during a study visit by the University of Fribourg to the United Nations Office at Geneva, a member of the ISU gave a presentation on the Convention. (Ngoc Phuong van der Blij)

2. On 17 February, during the study visit by the Sub-Committee on Energy and Environmental Security of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly to the relevant organizations in Geneva, Switzerland, a member of the ISU gave a presentation on the Convention. (Ngoc Phuong van der Blij)

3. On 27 August, during the 2014 Disarmament Fellowship Programme, organized by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, a member of the ISU gave a presentation on the Convention followed by a discussion on the challenges of the Convention led by the BWC Chair. (Ngoc Phuong van der Blij)

B. Following developments in science and technology

4. On 28 February, the ISU participated in the event entitled “Synthetic Biology and Security”, hosted by the Flowers Consortium at Kings College, London, UK. A member of the ISU gave a presentation on reviews of developments in science and technology through the 2012-2015 intersessional work programme. (Piers Millett)

5. From 1-2 April, the ISU participated in the workshop entitled “Big Data, Life Sciences and National Security”, hosted by the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in Washington D.C., USA. A member of the ISU chaired a session on “Security Risks of Big Data: Privacy, Openness, and Data Management”. (Piers Millett)

C. Strengthening implementation measures, including biosafety and biosecurity


7. From 2-4 April, the ISU participated in the workshop Biosecurity and Biosafety entitled “Future Trends and Solutions”, hosted by the Università degli Studi di Milano, in Milan, Italy, with the support of the Italian Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Interior. A member of the ISU made an opening statement on the outcomes of the Seventh
Review Conference and the 2012-2015 intersessional work programme (Ngoc Phuong van der Blij)

8. On 13 June, the ISU participated in a visit to the high containment facility (SiLab) of the Spiez Laboratory. (Gabriele Kraatz-Wadsack, Piers Millett, Ngoc Phuong van der Blij)

9. On October 28, 2014, upon invitation by the United States of America, the Chair and the Secretary of the 2014 BWC meetings, participated in a briefing and tour of U.S. Biodefense Facilities for BWC Diplomats in Frederick, Maryland. (Gabriele Kraatz-Wadsack)

D. Regional engagement

10. Following an invitation for a BWC awareness raising and national implementation workshop, organized by VERTIC, that took place on 18 March in Malawi, the ISU prepared and provided VERTIC with two presentations: one on cooperation and assistance and one on CBMs. Electronic and hard copies of the presentations have been distributed to participants.

E. Interactions with international organizations and forums

11. On 7 March, the ISU participated in the event entitled “10 Years of UNSC Resolution 1540: Global and Regional Efforts in the Field of Non-Proliferation and Disarmament of Weapons of Mass Destruction”, hosted by the Geneva Centre for Security Policy and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, at the United Nations Office at Geneva. (Piers Millett)

12. From 10-14 March, the ISU participated in the event entitled “Operation SOMMET: The Safe, Secure, Surveillance of Microbial Material and Emerging Technologies” hosted by INTERPOL, in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. A member of the ISU gave a presentation on International Regulations and Obligations. (Piers Millett)

13. On 11 March, the ISU participated in the 53rd Session of the Harmonized System Committee of the World Customs Organization, in Brussels, Belgium. A member of the ISU addressed the plenary on opportunities for collaboration with the Convention. (Ngoc Phuong van der Blij)

14. On 8 April, the ISU participated in the “Third Meeting of the Temporary Working Group on Verification of the Scientific Advisory Board” of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, in The Hague, Netherlands. A member of the Unit gave a briefing on the history of verification discussions under the Convention. (Piers Millett)

Annex II

National Points of Contact

The following national points of contact had been nominated to the ISU by 21 October 2014. Full contact details, including telephone numbers and e-mail addresses, are available to States Parties in the restricted area of the ISU website (http://www.unog.ch/bwc/restricted).

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Annex III

Report on participation in the Confidence-Building Measures

Provisional summary of participation in 2014\(^1\)

Key: D = declaration submitted; ND = nothing to declare; NN = nothing new to declare.

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