1 Participation

1.1 The fourth regional workshop preparing for the Eighth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) was held at the African Union Commission, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 13 and 14 September 2016. It targeted BWC States Parties as well as non-State Parties in Africa. 44 persons participated in the workshop.

1.2 *Regional States present* (18): Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

1.3 *EU Member States – Local representation* (2+1): Hungary, United Kingdom, as well as the European Union Delegation (EUDEL) to the African Union

1.4 *International Organisations* (2): African Union Commission (AUC), European External Action Service (EEAS), UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) – Geneva Branch, UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC)

1.5 *Civil society* (2): Biorisk Management Association of Kenya, Institute for Security Studies (South Africa), University of Sussex, (United Kingdom)

1.6 *Observer State Parties* (2): Russian Federation, United States

2 Meeting organisation

The workshop took place at and was co-organised with the AUC. The Governments of Canada and Norway and the International Law and Policy Institute (ILPI) contributed financially to the event.
2.1 *Tuesday, 13 September*

**Dr Tarek A. Sharif** (Head Defence and Security Division Peace and Security Department, AUC) welcomed the participants. He emphasised the importance the African Union attaches to disarmament and non-proliferation in general and the BWC in particular. The regional organisation is committed to full adherence to the convention in Africa. In his opening speech **Ambassador Gary Quince** (Head of European Union Delegation to the African Union) highlighted the European Union’s partnership with Africa and discussed the basic principles of the EU’s ambitions and action in disarmament and non-proliferation. **Ambassador Dr György Molnár** (Hungary, President-Designate of the Eighth BWC Review Conference) referred to the stakes involved in the Eighth Review Conference. He described how States Parties had agreed to a novel approach by having two sessions of the Preparatory Committee, which has allowed States Parties to present their proposals ahead of the Review Conference.

In the first substantive session of the morning, **Dr Alex Lampalzer** (BWC Implementation Support Unit) described the status of the BWC and gave a detailed briefing on the review process. **Dr Emil Kazakov** (Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Arms Export Control Division, EEAS) next discussed EU Council Decision 2016/51 (CFSP), situated it in the EU’s overall strategy on disarmament and proliferation prevention and described the additional projects foreseen for the period 2016–19 under the funding decision. **Dr Lampalzer** then concluded the morning with a detailed review of the 2012–15 intersessional meetings and listing possible topics that may feature high in the Review Conference discussions in November.

The afternoon started off with a discussion round moderated by **Dr Jean Pascal Zanders** (Political Affairs Officer, UNODA - Geneva Branch) on States Parties’ views on how to take the BWC forward. Representatives from African States were invited to identify the themes of greatest importance to them. Part of the debate centred around implementation obligations and other responsibilities non-States Parties would assume upon ratification or accession. Another prominent theme concerned the need for enhanced participation by African States in the BWC process. A third important issue was the question of communication between capital and the mission in Geneva: discussions in Geneva may appear quite abstract and have limited bearing in concrete needs of individual States. Participants were therefore hopeful for concrete, actionable programme elements to come out of the Review Conference.
The first thematic session focussed on strengthening national implementation. **Mr Scott Davis** (Deputy Director, Office of the Biological Policy Staff, US Department of State) noted the poor level of national implementation, and in particular the participation in the CBMs. He saw benefits in sustained assistance of States Parties in this respect, for which the BWC Implementation Support Unit (ISU) can play an important role. He referred to the US proposal to have Capacity-Building Officer post in the ISU. This person would be responsible for facilitating such cooperation, whether for national implementation, or to build disease surveillance, preparedness, and response capabilities or address other capacity needs. He also elaborated on an implementation review exercise involving Canada, Chile, Ghana, Mexico, and the United States. This experiment explores and tests innovative approaches to sharing information and strengthening national implementation systems. The USA plans to submit a working paper on the experience. **Dr Austin Ochieng Aluoch** (Biorisk Management Association of Kenya) reviewed the national implementation activities of Kenya. He started out by listing the main national legislation and regulations governing the life sciences and biotechnology activities. He also noted Kenya’s systematic submission of the annual Confidence-Building Measures (CBM) reports. He then discussed the working of the National Public Health Laboratories (NPHL), a division of the Ministry of Health, and the body’s role in setting and maintaining biosafety and -security standards. He noted that the NPHL faces serious challenges, both organisationally and as a consequence of increased threats posed by terrorism and major natural epidemics. Dr Ochieng reviewed the activities by the Biorisk Management Association of Kenya. He ended with a list of possible improvements to Kenya’s regulatory framework and practice.

In the second thematic session **Ambassador Molnár** described progress towards universalisation of the BWC. He highlighted the steps he, as well as the Hungarian Government, are undertaking to engage with states not yet party to the BWC and the responsibilities of all States parties towards achieving that goal. He focussed on challenges still remaining to catch up with the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, citing Africa and the Middle East as two regions requiring a lot of work still. **Dr Sharif** then introduced participants to the AU’s disarmament and non-proliferation framework, which forms an integrated part of Common African Defence and Security Policy. In order to counter the threat to the continent posed by non-conventional weapons the AU promotes adherence to and full compliance with all international instruments governing biological, chemical and nuclear weapons. Promotion of universality
of relevant disarmament and non-proliferation treaties plays a key role in this respect. Besides raising awareness the AU follows an approach to universalisation that emphasises assistance and interaction with assistance providers, as well as development-oriented treaty implementation. He next reviewed Africa’s preparations for the BWC Review Conference and participation in the preparatory meetings this year. Dr Sharif concluded by emphasising the need for ongoing training and capacity-building initiatives, promotion of the development-disarmament nexus, and enhancing the synergies with relevant regional agencies.

2.2 Wednesday, 14 September

The second day opened with a presentation by Dr James Revill (University of Sussex, UK) on the theme of review of science and technology. He began by exploring why this exercise is important to the BWC and how the review process as conducted during the 2012–15 intersessional series of meetings remained unsatisfactory. In particular, he noted the limited time dedicated to the issue, limited opportunity to take unexpected developments into account, the often lacking link between the expert presentations and the BWC, and the limited outputs resulting from the deliberations. Yet at the same time relevant developments in the life sciences are accelerating and widening. He then proposed several ideas to ameliorate the process, including the appointment of a facilitator and the creation of a position of Science Officer in the ISU. Dr Revill also listed the possibility of introducing a more regional focussed approach to science and technology review.

Next on the agenda was Article VII of the BWC on the provision of assistance to a State Party that has been exposed to dangers as a consequence of a violation of the treaty. Dr Zanders retraced the origins of the article and argued that despite clarifications by States Parties recorded in the final document of several Review Conferences there still exists scope for ambiguity concerning the phrasing of different parts of the article. In addition, it is far from clear how a request for assistance might play out if the article were to be invoked. Ms Pumza Matyila (Department of Inter-national Relations and Cooperation, South Africa) discussed the preparatory framework required for implementing Article VII, particularly the availability of national capacities to respond to disease outbreaks and coordination mechanisms between relevant national departments and agencies, and determination of national roles and responsibilities. In addition each state must also organise coordination on the international level. She then presented the South African working paper proposing a procedure for requesting assistance under Article VII and guidelines for a state submitting such an application to the UN Security Coun-
cil (UNSC). She noted that several BWC States Parties have issues with the involvement of the UNSC, but such is the requirement of the BWC provision. One way to overcome the matter is to allow assistance before the UNSC decides. Ms Matyila referred to the final report of the 7th Review Conference, which already envisaged such a possibility.

In the fifth thematic session Dr Caitriona McLeish (University of Sussex, UK) laid out detailed proposals on how States Parties could move forward with the concrete implementation of Article X on cooperation. The ideas ranged from consolidation of activities over the establishment of the position for an Article X implementation officer in the BWC Implementation Support Unit and national reporting on Article X activities to improvements to the current database matching offers and requests by States Parties and regional technical workshops. She also proposed that States Parties set up an Article X working group to address gaps and share opportunities.

The final thematic session looked at the issue of technology transfers and the role of Article III. Mr Alain Botre (Programme Officer 1540, UNREC) described UNREC’s programme to promote the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1540 in Africa with special attention to BWC-relevant technology transfers. UNREC conducted several assistance activities and organised a sub-regional workshop to help African states with the preparation of their 1540 report. As a result six states submitted their report. Plenty of work remains as 13 states have not yet filed their initial report with the 1540 Committee. Mr Botre then detailed the activities UNREC has undertaken in support of Resolution 1540 and Article III of the BWC. He ended with several recommendations on how UNREC may contribute to the universalisation of the BWC in Africa and assist with the implementation of Articles III and IV in particular.

The afternoon began with the second plenary session moderated by Dr Zanders on participants’ perspectives on a successful outcome of the Eighth Review Conference. Active participation by African States in the meeting became a central topic. Another area of debate was how Africa could benefit from the many assistance offers relating to different aspects of the BWC. It was noted that there is a need for the African nations to be more articulate in submitting requests for assistance. Presently a mismatch between the large number of offers of assistance and the few requests exists. To improve the utility of the assistance database more requests should be entered so that providers of assistance can also finetune their
offers. It was also noted that compared to other regions, there appeared to be limited or no intra-regional assistance among African nations. There was also some discussion on the value of extra-regional assistance to help African states with their BWC responsibilities.

Dr Lampalzer next offered some concluding thoughts before handing over the microphone to Ambassador Molnár, Dr Kazakov and Dr Admore Kambudzi (Acting Director, Peace and Security Department, AUC) for their closing remarks.