

Meeting 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

8 October 2019

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Item 8 of the provisional agenda

Progress with universalization of the Convention

Report on universalization activities¹

Submitted by the Chairperson

Summary

The Seventh Review Conference decided to request the Chair of the Meeting of States Parties to prepare an annual report on universalization activities (BWC/CONF.VII/7, Part III, paragraph 29), and the Eighth Review Conference decided to continue this practice (BWC/CONF.VIII/4, Part III, paragraph 8). The Chairman of the 2019 Meeting of States Parties has therefore compiled this document which outlines the results to date of the activities to promote universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention undertaken by the Chairman and the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) in 2019.² It also includes information from States Parties and different organizations, where that information has been provided to the Chairman or the ISU. The Convention currently has 183 States Parties (listed in the Annex), with four signatories and 10 States having neither signed nor ratified. A total of 14 States are therefore not party to the Convention.

I. Introduction

1. Since the previous Meeting of States Parties in December 2018, one State has joined the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The United Republic of Tanzania ratified the Convention on 14 August 2019, thus becoming the 183rd State Party (see Annex). A further four States have signed but not ratified the Convention and 10 States have neither signed nor ratified the Convention. This report outlines information available about these 14 States.

¹ The designations employed and the presentation of material in this report, including the numbers cited, do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Chairman concerning the legal status of any country or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

² The 2018 Meeting of States Parties took place from 4 to 7 December 2018. Any universalization activities which took place later in December 2018 could therefore not be included in the 2018 universalization report. For that reason, the current report also includes universalization activities and efforts undertaken in December 2018.



II. Activities to promote universalization

2. The following universalization activities have been undertaken and reported to the Chairman or the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) since the previous Meeting of States Parties in December 2018, or are planned to take place later in 2019:

(a) The African Union and UNODA co-organized a universalisation workshop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 11 to 12 December 2018, under European Union Council Decision 2016/51/CFSP. The workshop was intended for those States not party in Africa which did not attend an earlier sub-regional workshop in Djibouti from 3 to 4 October 2018. The workshop was attended by 35 representatives, including parliamentarians and officials, from four States not parties (Chad, Comoros, Namibia and the United Republic of Tanzania), nine States Parties including the three Depositary Governments (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Kenya, Morocco, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America), regional and sub-regional organizations (African Union, European Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development), the New Partnership for Africa's Development Agency, the Global Emerging Pathogen Treatment Consortium, the European Union CBRN Risk Mitigation Centre of Excellence for Eastern and Central Africa and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa;³

(b) From 12 to 13 December 2018, the ISU and the Government of Fiji with financial support from the Permanent Mission of Australia in Geneva organized a "BWC Universalization Workshop for the Pacific Region", in Nadi, Fiji. The aim of the workshop was to engage with the last three States not party to the BWC in the Pacific Region, namely Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia and Tuvalu, and inform them about the importance and benefits of joining the Convention. Detailed information is provided below under each respective State. As a follow-up to the workshop, the 2018 MSP Chairman, Mr. Ljupčo Jivan Gjorgjinski of North Macedonia, sent a letter to Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia and Tuvalu to encourage them to join the BWC;⁴

(c) During the workshop in Fiji, the ISU established contact with the Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) headquartered in Fiji. The ISU subsequently liaised with the Permanent Delegation of the PIF in Geneva, requesting its support in raising awareness and further promoting the universalization of the BWC in the region. In early January 2019, the ISU provided a briefing paper including the outcomes of the workshop and information on the BWC to the PIF Secretariat. The briefing document was circulated by the PIF Secretariat to all PIF Member States in mid-January 2019;

(d) On 25 April 2019, an initiative to universalize the BWC was launched by France via its embassies in Djibouti, Fiji (for Kiribati and Tuvalu), Manila (for the Federated States of Micronesia) and Namibia. After putting the fight against biological weapons into context, France recalled the main challenges faced by the French Chairmanship of the BWC. The importance of accession by the targeted countries in combining national efforts to combat these threats was highlighted, as well as the international commitments of these countries (e.g. the Chemical Weapons Convention and Security Council resolution 1540), and the political potential which accession could bring. France also highlighted the security capabilities to which the Convention gave access, as well as the economic benefits which accession would bring by boosting scientific and commercial cooperation. France also intended to provide technical and judicial assistance for the accession process and the transposition of the law into national law in the event of accession;

³ For more information see [https://www.unog.ch/unog/website/disarmament.nsf/\(httpPages\)/DD7B12C4E5027D7CC12583B30039BE0C?OpenDocument](https://www.unog.ch/unog/website/disarmament.nsf/(httpPages)/DD7B12C4E5027D7CC12583B30039BE0C?OpenDocument)

⁴ For more information see [https://www.unog.ch/unog/website/disarmament.nsf/\(httpPages\)/22A2CE0EE103CD93C125837C00428A5D?OpenDocument](https://www.unog.ch/unog/website/disarmament.nsf/(httpPages)/22A2CE0EE103CD93C125837C00428A5D?OpenDocument)

(e) A staff member of the ISU participated from 29 to 30 April 2019 in the "Regional Caribbean Parliamentary Workshop to Promote Ratification and Implementation of the BWC and Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004)", organized by Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies of Haiti participated in the workshop;⁵

(f) On 16 May 2019, a video message by the Chairman of the 2019 Meeting of States Parties was delivered to the "Workshop on Promoting the Role of Women Parliamentarians in Africa in Preventing the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction" which took place in Banjul, the Gambia. In his message, the Chairman noted that parliamentarians play a crucial role in advocating for the accession, ratification and implementation of the Convention;

(g) On 21 September 2019, UNODA and the House of Representatives of New Zealand jointly organized a "Workshop on the universalization of the BWC for the Pacific", in Wellington, New Zealand with funding provided by the European Union. Ministers, senior officials and parliamentarians from the three States not party to the BWC in the Pacific, Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia and Tuvalu, participated in the workshop. Also attending were parliamentarians and officials from seven States Parties (Fiji, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga and Vanuatu), representatives of the three Depositary Governments, officials from regional organizations (Caribbean Community, European Union and Pacific Islands Forum), from civil society (Parliamentarians for Global Action and the Verification Research, Training and Information Centre), several United Nations entities (Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Group of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1540), as well as the World Health Organization and the Inter-Parliamentary Union;

(h) In October 2019, a letter from the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France will be sent to all Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Signatory States and States not party to encourage them to join the Convention;

(i) In October 2019, on the margins of the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, the Chairman of the Meeting of States Parties will meet with the Permanent Representatives of Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia and Tuvalu in order to encourage them to join the BWC and to seek further information regarding their accession processes;

(j) In November 2019, the Chairman and the ISU will meet with the Permanent Representatives of Haiti, Namibia and South Sudan in Geneva in order to encourage them to join the Convention and to seek further information regarding their ratification or accession processes;

(k) The ISU remained in close and regular contact with the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), the Committee established pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC) to coordinate mutual universalization efforts;

(l) Throughout the year, the ISU has remained in regular contact with Signatory States and States not party that have expressed an interest in the Convention, sought assistance to join, or requested additional information;

(m) The ISU has also been coordinating with the Depositary Governments on various universalization-related matters. Representatives from the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America attended the abovementioned regional universalization workshop on the BWC in Addis Ababa which took place in December 2018. A representative from the United States of America attended the abovementioned regional universalization workshop on the BWC in

⁵ For more information see <https://www.pgaction.org/news/2019-regional-caribbean-parliamentary-workshop-bwc-1540.html>

Fiji in December 2018, while the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland prepared written statements which were read by the ISU on their behalf at the opening session. In addition, the United States of America informed the ISU that it has actively engaged with States not party during 2019 to encourage their adherence to the Convention. The issue has been raised by senior officials, both face-to-face and through demarches in capitals, and through outreach on the margins of multilateral meetings; and

(n) As requested by the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, pursuant to Decision 73/546 of the General Assembly, the ISU has prepared a background paper for the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The background paper provides information on adherence to the Convention in the region.

III. Overview of current status

3. Activities conducted throughout the year have generated additional information on progress towards universalization. This report includes data from the activities listed above, as well as from communications from States Parties, Signatory States and States not party, as well as from interested organizations and entities.

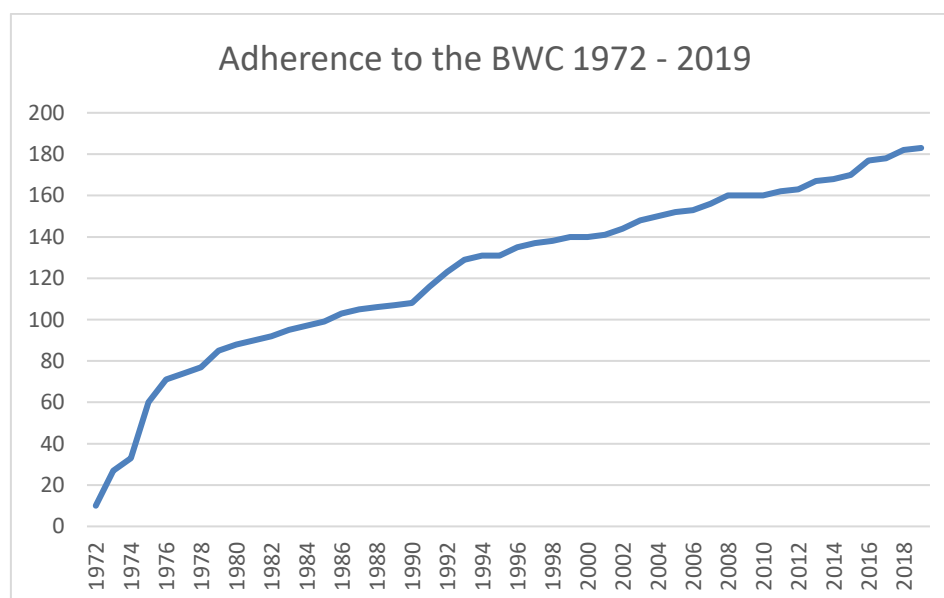
4. The two tables below show Signatory States and States not party by geographical region and by progress towards ratification or accession respectively. Significant progress has been made during 2019 which can be noted in Table 2 as compared with 2018. With its ratification on 14 August 2019, the United Republic of Tanzania moved from the first category to become the 183rd State Party to the Convention. South Sudan has moved from the third category to the first with approval of BWC accession by its Council of Ministers. Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia and Tuvalu have all moved from the third to the second category due activities reported after the regional workshops conducted for Pacific Island States in December 2018 and September 2019. Figure 1 shows that although the BWC entered into force almost 45 years ago, States are still joining the Convention at a steady rate.

Table 1

<i>Geographical region</i>	<i>States not party and Signatories* to the Convention</i>	<i>Total</i>
Asia and Pacific	Kiribati, Micronesia (Federated States of), Tuvalu	3
Latin America and Caribbean	Haiti*	1
Middle East	Israel, Syrian Arab Republic*	2
Africa	Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt*, Eritrea, Namibia, Somalia*, South Sudan	8

Table 2

<i>Situation</i>	<i>States not party and Signatories* to the Convention</i>	<i>Total</i>
Accession or ratification process well advanced	Haiti, South Sudan, Micronesia (Federated States of)	3
Accession or ratification process started	Chad, Djibouti, Kiribati, Namibia, Tuvalu	5
Waiting for further information, assistance, or have other priorities, etc.	Comoros, Eritrea, Somalia*	3
No action expected in near future	Egypt*, Israel, Syrian Arab Republic*	3

Figure 1⁶

IV. Signatories

Egypt

5. Egypt attended the 2019 Meetings of Experts in Geneva. On 30 August 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland, the Chief of the ISU gave a presentation on the Convention to participants of the 2019 Disarmament Fellowship Programme. The participants included a representative from Egypt.

6. On 24 September 2019, the ISU briefed a representative from the Permanent Mission of Egypt in Geneva on issues relating to the BWC and inquired about the prospects for progress in ratification by Egypt. The representative explained that BWC ratification is

⁶ Figure 1 provides information on the number of States which have deposited instruments of accession, ratification or succession to the BWC since it was opened for signature on 10 April 1972. The Convention entered into force on 26 March 1975 following the deposit of instruments of ratification by 22 States, including the three Depositary States.

linked to other political considerations in the region and that Egypt is particularly focusing on the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction to take place in New York in November 2019.

Haiti

7. The ISU participated from 29 to 30 April 2019 in the "Regional Caribbean Parliamentary Workshop to Promote Ratification and Implementation of the BWC and Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004)", organized by Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies of Haiti participated in the workshop. The event was a good opportunity for the ISU to raise the BWC with a senior parliamentarian from Haiti and to obtain further information on the current status of the ratification process. During the bilateral meeting, the Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies confirmed that the issue will be reported to the President of the Chamber, as well as the Head of State, to stress the importance of ratification. A representative from Haiti was sponsored under the BWC Sponsorship Programme to participate in the 2019 Meetings of Experts.

8. In November 2019, the Chairman and the ISU will meet with the Permanent Representative of Haiti in Geneva in order to encourage Haiti to join the Convention and to seek further information regarding its ratification process.

Somalia

9. No further information has been reported during 2019.

Syrian Arab Republic

10. The Syrian Arab Republic informed the ISU that it would participate in the Meeting of States Parties in December 2019. No further information has been reported during 2019.

V. States neither signed nor ratified

Chad

11. Three representatives from Chad attended the abovementioned regional universalization workshop on the BWC in Addis Ababa which took place in December 2018. No further information has been reported during 2019.

Comoros

12. One representative from Comoros attended the abovementioned regional universalization workshop on the BWC in Addis Ababa which took place in December 2018. No further information has been reported during 2019.

Djibouti

13. On 25 April 2019, an initiative to universalize the BWC was launched by France via its embassy in Djibouti, where France highlighted the importance of the BWC, the current French Chairmanship, as well as the benefits of joining the Convention. France also intended to provide technical and judicial assistance for the accession process and the transposition of the law into national law in the event of accession by Djibouti.

Eritrea

14. No further information has been reported during 2019.

Israel

15. Israel participated as an Observer State in the 2019 Meetings of Experts in Geneva. The ISU subsequently met with a representative from the Permanent Mission of Israel in Geneva and briefed them on issues relating to the BWC and inquired about the prospects

for progress in accession by Israel. The position of Israel remains the same as in previous years.

Kiribati

16. During the abovementioned “BWC Universalization Workshop for the Pacific Region” in Fiji, Kiribati clearly demonstrated its high interest in the BWC by having three strategic offices represented at the workshop, namely the Attorney-General’s Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Police Service. Kiribati requested a bilateral meeting with the ISU on the margins of the workshop to discuss the accession process. The participating representatives all undertook to make their recommendation to the Cabinet for accession without further delay. The participants also requested political support from the BWC Chairman and the ISU. As a follow-up to the workshop, the 2018 MSP Chairman, Mr. Gjorgjinski, wrote to the Permanent Representative of Kiribati to the United Nations to encourage accession to the BWC.

17. On 25 April 2019, an initiative to universalize the BWC was launched by France via its embassy in Suva, Fiji, to encourage Kiribati to join the BWC. France highlighted the importance of the BWC, the current French Chairmanship, as well as the benefits of joining the Convention. France also intended to provide technical and judicial assistance for the accession process and the transposition of the law into national law in the event of accession.

18. On 21 September 2019, Kiribati participated in the abovementioned “Workshop on the universalization of the BWC for the Pacific”, in Wellington, New Zealand. Kiribati sent a high-level delegation to the workshop, including the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Environment, Land and Agricultural Development and the Attorney-General. Information received subsequently by the ISU confirms that good progress towards accession to the Convention is being made by Kiribati.

19. In October 2019 in New York, the Chairman of the 2019 Meeting of States Parties will meet with the Permanent Representative of Kiribati to the United Nations to encourage Kiribati to accede to the Convention.

Micronesia (Federated States of)

20. The Assistant Attorney-General of the Federated States of Micronesia attended the abovementioned “BWC Universalization Workshop for the Pacific Region” in Fiji. At the workshop, he announced that the accession process would be initiated upon his return to his office and that it could be completed in 2019. He later reported to the ISU that the Attorney-General had been informed about the workshop and had conveyed his recommendation directly to the President for accession to the BWC without further delay. As a follow-up to the workshop, the 2018 MSP Chairman, Mr. Gjorgjinski, wrote to the Permanent Representative of the Federated States of Micronesia to the United Nations to encourage accession to the BWC.

21. On 25 April 2019, an initiative to universalize the BWC was launched by France via its embassy in Manila, the Philippines, to encourage the Federated States of Micronesia to join the BWC. France highlighted the importance of the BWC, the current French Chairmanship, as well as the benefits of joining the Convention. France also intended to provide technical and judicial assistance for the accession process and the transposition of the law into national law in the event of accession.

22. On 21 September 2019, the Federated States of Micronesia participated in the abovementioned “Workshop on the universalization of the BWC for the Pacific”, in Wellington, New Zealand. The Assistant Attorney-General reported that a legislative proposal from the President to Congress had been drafted and had undergone a first reading. However, in view of the change of government, the initiative had come to a temporary halt. He expressed his confidence about progress in the near future. On 13 June 2019, a resolution was introduced in Congress calling for accession to the Convention.

23. In October 2019 in New York, the Chairman of the 2019 Meeting of States Parties will meet with the Permanent Representative of the Federated States of Micronesia to the United Nations to encourage accession to the Convention.

Namibia

24. One representative from Namibia attended the abovementioned regional universalization workshop on the BWC in Addis Ababa which took place in December 2018.

25. On 25 April 2019, an initiative to universalize the BWC was launched by France via its embassy in Windhoek to encourage Namibia to join the BWC. France highlighted the importance of the BWC, the current French Chairmanship, as well as the benefits of joining the Convention. France also intended to provide technical and judicial assistance for the accession process and the transposition of the law into national law in the event of accession. On 3 May, Namibia informed France that it was considering applying to the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and a prerequisite for joining the group would be for Namibia to accede to the BWC, alongside other treaties. For that reason, Namibia is reviewing the possibility of joining the Convention. Furthermore, Namibia was carefully considering the French offer of technical and legal assistance for the accession process.

26. In November 2019, the Chairman and the ISU will meet with the Permanent Representative of Namibia in Geneva in order to encourage Namibia to join the Convention and to seek further information regarding its accession process.

South Sudan

27. On 7 June 2019, the Council of Ministers of South Sudan approved the country's accession to the BWC and instructed that the BWC be transmitted to the Transitional National Legislative Authority for consideration.

28. In November 2019, the Chairman and the ISU will meet with the Permanent Representative of South Sudan in Geneva in order to encourage South Sudan to join the Convention and to seek further information regarding its accession process.

Tuvalu

29. During the abovementioned "BWC Universalization Workshop for the Pacific Region" in Fiji, Tuvalu was represented by an official from the Attorney-General's office, who undertook to make a recommendation for accession to the Cabinet. Tuvalu demonstrated its interest in accession to the BWC by requesting a bilateral meeting with a participating official from Niue (the most recent BWC State Party from the region) on the margins of the workshop, in order to collect all practical information on Niue's accession process. Tuvalu requested political support from the MSP Chairman and the ISU. As a follow-up to the workshop, the 2018 MSP Chairman, Mr. Gjorgjinski, wrote to the Permanent Representative of Tuvalu to the United Nations to encourage accession to the BWC.

30. On 25 April 2019, an initiative to universalize the BWC was launched by France via its embassy in Suva, Fiji, to encourage Tuvalu to join the BWC. France highlighted the importance of the BWC, the current French Chairmanship, as well as the benefits of joining the Convention. France also intended to provide technical and judicial assistance for the accession process and the transposition of the law into national law in the event of accession.

31. On 21 September 2019, the Crown Counsel of Tuvalu participated in the abovementioned "Workshop on the universalization of the BWC for the Pacific", in Wellington, New Zealand. Information received subsequently by the ISU confirms that good progress towards accession to the Convention is being made by Tuvalu.

32. In October 2019 in New York, the Chairman of the Meeting of States Parties will meet with the Permanent Representative of Tuvalu to the United Nations to encourage accession by Tuvalu.

Annex

List of States Parties to the Convention (as at 8 October 2019)

1. Afghanistan
2. Albania
3. Algeria
4. Andorra
5. Angola
6. Antigua and Barbuda
7. Argentina
8. Armenia
9. Australia
10. Austria
11. Azerbaijan
12. Bahamas
13. Bahrain
14. Bangladesh
15. Barbados
16. Belarus
17. Belgium
18. Belize
19. Benin
20. Bhutan
21. Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
22. Bosnia-Herzegovina
23. Botswana
24. Brazil
25. Brunei Darussalam
26. Bulgaria
27. Burkina Faso
28. Burundi
29. Cambodia
30. Cameroon
31. Canada
32. Cabo Verde
33. Central African Republic
34. Chile
35. China
36. Colombia

37. Congo
38. Cook Islands
39. Costa Rica
40. Côte d'Ivoire
41. Croatia
42. Cuba
43. Cyprus
44. Czechia
45. Democratic People's Republic of Korea
46. Democratic Republic of the Congo
47. Denmark
48. Dominica
49. Dominican Republic
50. Ecuador
51. El Salvador
52. Equatorial Guinea
53. Estonia
54. Eswatini
55. Ethiopia
56. Fiji
57. Finland
58. France
59. Gabon
60. Gambia
61. Georgia
62. Germany
63. Ghana
64. Greece
65. Grenada
66. Guatemala
67. Guinea
68. Guinea-Bissau
69. Guyana
70. Holy See
71. Honduras
72. Hungary
73. Iceland
74. India
75. Indonesia
76. Iran (Islamic Republic of)

77. Iraq
78. Ireland
79. Italy
80. Jamaica
81. Japan
82. Jordan
83. Kazakhstan
84. Kenya
85. Kuwait
86. Kyrgyzstan
87. Lao, People's Democratic Republic
88. Latvia
89. Lebanon
90. Lesotho
91. Liberia
92. Libya
93. Liechtenstein
94. Lithuania
95. Luxembourg
96. Madagascar
97. Malawi
98. Malaysia
99. Maldives
100. Mali
101. Malta
102. Marshall Islands
103. Mauritania
104. Mauritius
105. Mexico
106. Monaco
107. Mongolia
108. Montenegro
109. Morocco
110. Mozambique
111. Myanmar
112. Nauru
113. Nepal
114. Netherlands
115. New Zealand
116. Nicaragua

117. Niger
118. Nigeria
119. Niue
120. North Macedonia
121. Norway
122. Oman
123. Pakistan
124. Palau
125. Panama
126. Papua New Guinea
127. Paraguay
128. Peru
129. Philippines
130. Poland
131. Portugal
132. Qatar
133. Republic of Korea
134. Republic of Moldova
135. Romania
136. Russian Federation
137. Rwanda
138. Saint Kitts and Nevis
139. Saint Lucia
140. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
141. Samoa
142. San Marino
143. Sao Tome and Principe
144. Saudi Arabia
145. Senegal
146. Serbia
147. Seychelles
148. Sierra Leone
149. Singapore
150. Slovakia
151. Slovenia
152. Solomon Islands
153. South Africa
154. Spain
155. Sri Lanka
156. State of Palestine

157. Sudan
158. Suriname
159. Sweden
160. Switzerland
161. Tajikistan
162. Thailand
163. Timor-Leste
164. Togo
165. Tonga
166. Trinidad and Tobago
167. Tunisia
168. Turkey
169. Turkmenistan
170. Uganda
171. Ukraine
172. United Arab Emirates
173. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
174. United Republic of Tanzania
175. United States of America
176. Uruguay
177. Uzbekistan
178. Vanuatu
179. Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
180. Viet Nam
181. Yemen
182. Zambia
183. Zimbabwe

List of signatories to the Convention (as at 8 October 2019)

1. Egypt
 2. Haiti
 3. Somalia
 4. Syrian Arab Republic
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