
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

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Progress with universalization of the Convention

Report on universalization activities¹

Submitted by the Chairperson

Summary

The Seventh Review Conference decided to request the Chairperson 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 Chairperson of the 2020 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 Chairperson and the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) in 2020 and 2021.² It also includes information from States Parties and different organizations, where that information has been provided to the Chairperson 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.

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 Chairperson concerning the legal status of any country or territory or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers.

² The 2019 Meeting of States Parties took place from 3 to 6 December 2019. Any universalization activities which took place later in December 2019 could therefore not be included in the 2019 universalization report and are instead included in this report.



I. Introduction

1. Since the previous Meeting of States Parties in December 2019, no State has joined the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The Convention currently has 183 States Parties, with four States having signed but not ratified the Convention and 10 States having neither signed nor ratified the Convention. This report outlines information available about these 14 States.

2. The 2020 Meeting of States Parties was originally scheduled to take place from 8 to 11 December 2020. However, the Meeting was postponed several times due to the COVID-19 pandemic and, according to the agreement by States Parties by written silence procedure, it was instead scheduled to take place at the Palais des Nations in Geneva from 22 to 25 November 2021. For that reason, the current report includes universalization activities and efforts undertaken from December 2019 until 23 September 2021, which is the submission date of the current report.

II. Activities to promote universalization

3. The following universalization activities have been undertaken and reported to the Chairperson or the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) since the previous Meeting of States Parties in December 2019, or are planned to take place later in 2021:

(a) In December 2019, France initiated a series of efforts to promote BWC universalization under the Chairmanship of Ambassador Yann Hwang of France. The French Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs wrote to his counterparts from Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Egypt, Haiti, Israel, Kiribati, Micronesia, Namibia, South Sudan and Tuvalu to encourage them to join the Convention;

(b) During 2020 and 2021, the ISU and the Geneva Branch of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) activated each of their contact within the States left to join the Convention, to seek for further information and update on their ratification or accession progress. Updated universalization background documents were shared with some of the States not party. The ISU and UNODA Geneva Branch is currently maintaining regular contact to support and inform those governments on the ratification or accession process;

(c) In September 2020, a letter from the 2020 Chairperson of the Meeting of States Parties, Ambassador Cleopa Kilonzo Mailu of Kenya, was sent to all Signatory States, as well as States not party to the BWC, to better understand their circumstances and encourage them to consider joining the Convention;

(d) On 4 March 2021, the UNODA Geneva Branch convened a virtual regional workshop for African States not party to the Convention, in cooperation with the ISU and the Permanent Mission of Kenya in Geneva. The workshop was organized in the framework of European Union Council Decision 2019/97 in support of the BWC. The workshop was tailored to build understanding about the Convention's provisions and highlighted how the Convention would have a concrete impact in the African context. The workshop was attended by representatives from Chad, Egypt, Namibia and South Sudan. Marjolijn van Deelen, European Union Special Envoy for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, and Ambassador Cleopa Mailu of Kenya, Chairperson of the BWC Meeting of States Parties, addressed the audience during the opening session. Senior officials of the three BWC depositary governments, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, encouraged the participating States to join the Convention through video messages. A representative of the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) highlighted the importance of the BWC and biosecurity in the African context. Experts from key entities in Africa, namely the African Biosafety Network of Expertise (NEPAD-ABNE), Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), Global Emerging Pathogens Treatment Consortium (GET Africa), as well as the Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC), outlined areas where their respective organisations could work together with African States not party to the Convention and support their efforts to join the Convention. The workshop was also

attended by a representative of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC). The representatives of the participating States not party shared their countries' considerations about joining the Convention, while some provided updates on the status of their States' accession process.

(e) VERTIC reported that since the abovementioned regional workshop on 4 March 2021, it had followed up with Chad and Namibia. In 2020 and 2021, VERTIC also updated materials within its publicly available BWC universality package, as well as a fact sheet on the BWC;³

(f) A virtual workshop, organised by the UNODA Geneva Branch under EU Council Decision 2019/97, for representatives from the Permanent Missions to the African Union in Addis Ababa of the eight States not party in Africa is tentatively planned for October/November 2021;

(g) The Chairperson of the 2020 Meeting of States Parties is planning to hold a series of bilateral meetings with Signatory States and States not party to the Convention based in Geneva, Switzerland, in October and November 2021 to encourage them to join the Convention and to seek further information regarding their ratification or accession processes;

(h) The ISU remained in close and regular contact with the African Union (AU), the European Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), the Committee established pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and UNODA's UNSCR 1540 Support Unit, including its Regional Coordinator for Africa, the Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC), as well as UNODA's Regional Centres for Africa (UNREC), Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) and Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) to coordinate mutual universalization efforts; and

(i) The ISU also participated in informal workshops organized in the framework of the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

III. Overview of current status

4. 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.

5. The two tables below show Signatory States and States not party by geographical region and by progress towards ratification or accession respectively. Progress has slowed in 2020 and 2021, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the re-prioritization of scarce resources.

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

³ See <https://www.vertic.org/programmes/nim/biological-weapons-and-materials/universality-of-the-bwc/>

<i>Geographical region</i>	<i>States not party and Signatories* to the Convention</i>	<i>Total</i>
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

IV. Signatories

Egypt

6. A representative from Egypt participated in the Regional Workshop on Achieving the Universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention in Africa on 4 March 2021. Egypt also attended the 2020 BWC Meetings of Experts held from 30 August to 8 September 2021 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Haiti

7. No further information has been reported during 2020 and 2021.

Somalia

8. In December 2019, Ambassador Yann Hwang of France, Chairperson of the 2019 Meeting of States Parties, together with the ISU, had a meeting with H.E Abdullahi Hamud, State Minister, Office of the Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Somalia to discuss BWC universalization. Somalia expressed interest in receiving further support in the ratification process.

Syrian Arab Republic

9. On 17 September 2021, a representative from the Syrian Arab Republic participated in the 2021 United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament, during which a representative of the ISU gave a briefing on the BWC.

V. States neither signed nor ratified

Chad

10. Representatives from Chad participated in the Regional Workshop on Achieving the Universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention in Africa on 4 March 2021. In the aftermath of the workshop, a follow-up conversation was held between UNODA, the ISU and the Permanent Mission of Chad in Geneva. It was suggested to hold a virtual national roundtable in the framework of the European Union Council Decision, assembling all relevant national entities, in order to raise awareness on the BWC at the capital level and facilitate national discussion on joining the Convention.

11. Chad attended the 2020 BWC Meetings of Experts held from 30 August to 8 September 2021 in Geneva, Switzerland. On 17 September 2021, a representative from Chad participated in the 2021 United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament, during which a representative of the ISU gave a briefing on the BWC.

12. Within the framework of the German Biosecurity Programme and the Enable and Enhance Initiative, Germany has been encouraging Chad to join the BWC. Moreover, Germany reported receiving positive feedback from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chad, mentioning that Chad would assess accession to the BWC with a positive outlook, especially in light of Germany's substantial support through the Enable and Enhance Initiative and in light of the experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic, and Germany's support to confront it.

Comoros

13. No further information has been reported during 2020 and 2021.

Djibouti

14. No further information has been reported during 2020 and 2021.

Eritrea

15. No further information has been reported during 2020 and 2021.

Israel

16. Israel attended the 2020 BWC Meetings of Experts held from 30 August to 8 September 2021 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Kiribati

17. No further information has been reported during 2020 and 2021.

Micronesia (Federated States of)

18. In 2020, the U.S. Embassy in Micronesia worked closely with the Government of Micronesia to encourage the completion of the process of accession to the BWC. Ambassador Carmen Cantor met with Micronesia's Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Kandi Elieisar, in August 2020, to reassure him that the Compact of Free Association between Micronesia and the United States would not be adversely affected, and that in fact, the United States fully supports Micronesia's accession to the BWC. As a result of that

engagement, the instrument of accession to the BWC has been sent to the Micronesian Congress by the Executive Branch, and it is currently being reviewed.

Namibia

19. UNODA and the ISU, via the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, have contacted Namibian authorities to encourage accession to the BWC. A representative from Namibia participated in the Regional Workshop on Achieving the Universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention in Africa on 4 March 2021. After the workshop, a follow-up conversation was held between UNODA, the ISU and the Permanent Mission of Namibia in Geneva. It was suggested to hold a virtual national roundtable assembling all relevant national entities, in order to raise awareness about the BWC at the capital level and facilitate national discussions on acceding to the Convention.

South Sudan

20. A representative from South Sudan participated in the Regional Workshop on Achieving the Universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention in Africa on 4 March 2021.

Tuvalu

21. The Office of the Attorney-General in Tuvalu contacted the ISU in early 2020 to request assistance with drafting a policy paper on the benefits and obligations under the BWC, in view of a potential accession to be considered by its government. The requested policy paper was provided by the ISU to Tuvalu in July 2020. No further information has been received by the ISU since then.

Annex

List of States Parties to the Convention (as at 23 September 2021)

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 23 September 2021)

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