

Ninth Review Conference 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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Preparatory Committee**Geneva, 20 December 2021 and 4-11 April 2022**

Item 7 of the agenda

Comprehensive consideration of all provisions of the Convention

History and operation of the confidence-building measures

Background information document submitted by the Implementation Support Unit

Summary

The Preparatory Committee decided to request the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) to prepare a background information document on the history and operation of the confidence-building measures (CBMs) agreed at the Second Review Conference and revised at the Third and Seventh Review Conferences, with the document to include data in summary tabular form on the participation of States Parties in the measures since the last Review Conference (see BWC/CONF.IX/PC/2, paragraph 27). The ISU has duly prepared this document which outlines the history and operation of the CBMs. Annex I provides data in summary tabular form on the participation of States Parties in the measures since the last Review Conference while Annex II presents information on CBM returns submitted since 1987.

I. History of the CBMs

1. States Parties agreed the concept and general content of the CBMs during the Second Review Conference in 1986, introducing four CBMs. The Conference did not specify the modalities for submission, or the forms on which to submit, but established for this purpose an "Ad Hoc Meeting of Scientific and Technical Experts from States Parties to Finalise the Modalities for the Exchange of Information and Data", which was held in 1987. The Third Review Conference in 1991 re-examined the CBMs and agreed to modify and expand them. The Fourth Review Conference also examined the CBMs but did not make any changes. The Sixth Review Conference considered the CBMs and revised and updated various aspects of the procedure for submitting, collating and publishing the CBMs, and for reporting on participation. The Seventh Review Conference took steps to make CBMs more user friendly by adopting revised reporting forms and decided to consider how to enable fuller participation in the CBMs during the intersessional programme in 2012 and 2013. Moreover, the Conference requested the ISU, in cooperation with States Parties, to continue examining and developing options for electronic means of submission of CBMs.



2. As reported first in the background information document submitted by the ISU to the 2018 Meeting of Experts on Strengthening National Implementation (MX3)¹, the ISU, with financial support from Germany and the European Union, developed an electronic CBM platform in accordance with the request of the Seventh Review Conference. The tool has been used for CBM submissions since 2019.

A. Second Review Conference (8–26 September 1986)

3. The Second Review Conference (see BWC/CONF.II/13) "mindful of the provisions of Article V and Article X of the Convention, and determined to strengthen its authority and to enhance confidence in the implementation of its provisions" agreed that "the States Parties are to implement, on the basis of mutual co-operation, the following measures, in order to prevent or reduce the occurrence of ambiguities, doubts and suspicions, and in order to improve international co-operation in the field of peaceful bacteriological (biological) activities". The "following measures", which became known as the Confidence-Building Measures or CBMs, were:

- **CBM A** – Exchange of data, including name, location, scope and general description of their activities, on research centres and laboratories that meet very high national or international safety standards established for handling, for permitted purposes, biological materials that pose a high individual and community risk or specialise in permitted biological activities directly related to the Convention;
- **CBM B** – Exchange of information on all outbreaks of infectious disease and similar occurrences caused by toxins that seem to deviate from the normal pattern as regards type, development, place, or time of occurrence. If possible, the information provided would include, as soon as it is available, data on the type of disease, approximate area affected, and number of cases.
- **CBM C** – Exchange of information on encouragement of publication of results of biological research directly related to the Convention, in scientific journals generally available to States Parties, as well as promotion of use for permitted purposes of knowledge gained in this research.
- **CBM D** – **Exchange of information on active promotion of contacts between scientists engaged in biological research directly related to the Convention, including exchanges for joint research on a mutual agreed basis.**

4. The Second Review Conference did not go further than this outline of what information should be exchanged, but decided "to hold an ad hoc meeting of scientific and technical experts from States Parties to finalise the modalities for the exchange of information and data by working out, inter alia, appropriate forms to be used by States Parties for the exchange of information agreed to in this Final Declaration, thus enabling States Parties to follow a standardised procedure". This group was to meet in Geneva for the period 31 March to 15 April 1987 and was to communicate the results of the work to the States Parties immediately thereafter.

5. The Second Review Conference also established an interim mechanism to provide for exchanges of information prior to decisions on the modalities. The Conference urged States Parties to promptly apply these four CBMs and report the data to the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs (UNDDA), and requested UNDDA to make available the information received to all States Parties.

¹ [BWC/MSP/2018/MX.3/2*](#) and [BWC/MSP/2018/MX.3/2/Corr.1](#).

B. Ad Hoc Meeting of Scientific and Technical Experts from States Parties to finalise the modalities for the exchange of information and data (31 March–15 April 1987)

6. Representatives from 39 States Parties participated in this meeting, and an expert from the World Health Organization (WHO) was on hand to answer technical questions. Its report ([BWC/CONF.II/EX/2](#)) recorded a number of understandings and agreements detailing the modalities for the CBMs. These included agreements that:

(a) All information submitted should be provided in one of the authentic languages of the Convention and be sent to the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs and be promptly forwarded, in the form received, to all States Parties;

(b) The information should also be made available to the World Health Organization;

(c) The first exchange of information and data should take place as soon as possible and be sent to the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs not later than 15 October 1987; and

(d) Thereafter information should be given on an annual basis, should be provided not later than 15 April, and should cover the previous calendar year.

7. The meeting agreed on guidelines on what each measure covered and on the type of information to be provided for each: for example, what kind of research centres were to be included in CBM A, and what constituted a disease outbreak that "deviated from the normal pattern", and should thus be included in CBM B. The meeting produced standard forms for CBMs A, B and D (no form was produced for CBM C).

8. There was also discussion of the financial implications of the CBM process. The report noted that while General Assembly resolution [41/58 A](#) (1986) had requested the United Nations Secretary-General to "render the necessary assistance and provide such services as may be required for the implementation of relevant parts of the Final Declaration" of the Second Review Conference, the United Nations Secretariat had stated that "such services and assistance would have no financial implications for the regular budget of the United Nations and that all related costs would be met by the States Parties to the Convention in accordance with the rules of procedure adopted by the Second Review Conference"². This left the situation rather unclear: the United Nations was not to pay for the operation of the CBMs from its regular budget, but neither did the BWC States Parties explicitly undertake to meet the costs.

C. Third Review Conference (9–27 September 1991)

9. In accordance with the decision of the Second Review Conference, the Third Review Conference considered the effectiveness of the CBMs. To this end, States Parties noted the importance of the process and recognised the exchange of information that took place between 1987 and 1991. The significance of the CBMs was further highlighted by including mention of them, for the first time, in the Solemn Declaration which opened the Final Declaration of that conference. States Parties solemnly declared: "Their determination to enhance the implementation and effectiveness of the Convention and to further strengthen its authority, including through the confidence-building measures." All States Parties were urged to submit information to future rounds of information exchange. A specific call was made to States Parties which did not take part in the Third Review Conference to participate in the implementation of the agreed CBMs.

10. The review of the CBMs resulted in a number of proposals for alterations, several of which reached consensus. The Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference ([BWC/CONF.III/23](#)) states:

² Note from the Secretariat, A/C.1/41/9.

"With a view to promoting increased participation and strengthening further the exchange of information, the Conference agrees to reaffirm those measures established at the Second Review Conference with the following improvements: to add a declaration on "Nothing to declare" or "Nothing new to declare"; to amend and extend the exchange of data on research centres and laboratories; to amend the exchange of information on outbreaks of infectious diseases and similar occurrences caused by toxins; to amend the measure for the active promotion of contacts; and to add three new confidence-building measures entitled "Declaration of legislation, regulations and other measures"; "Declaration of past activities in offensive and/or defensive biological research development programmes"; and "Declaration of vaccine production facilities"."

These amendments established a set of seven CBMs, which included:

- Declaration form on "Nothing to declare" or "Nothing new to declare";
- CBM A: Research centres, laboratories and biological defence research and development programmes:
 - Part 1: Exchange of data on research centres and laboratories;
 - Part 2: Exchange of information on national biological defence research and development programmes;
- CBM B: Exchange of information on outbreaks of infectious diseases and similar occurrences caused by toxins;
- CBM C: Encouragement of publication of results and promotion of use of knowledge;
- CBM D: Active promotion of contacts;
- CBM E: Declaration of legislation, regulations and other measures;
- CBM F: Declaration of past activities in offensive and/or defensive biological research and development programmes;
- CBM G: Declaration of vaccine production facilities.

11. The Third Review Conference updated the forms for use in submissions in line with these changes, and revised the guidelines on the information that should be provided (the guidelines were integrated into the forms)

12. The Conference reconfirmed that submissions using the new forms should be sent to the United Nations Department (now Office) for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) no later than 15 April on an annual basis and should cover the previous calendar year.

13. States Parties also noted that the new and the revised procedures would add further duties to, and make even greater demands on the time of, UNODA. As a result, the United Nations Secretary-General was requested to allocate the necessary staff resources and other requirements based in UNODA in Geneva to assist their effective implementation. The Secretary-General was requested to receive, compile, and make available to States Parties information related to the implementation of the Convention and of the decisions of the Third Review Conference. It was suggested that the UNODA computer database system could facilitate this work.

D. Fourth Review Conference (25 November–6 December 1996)

14. The commitment of States Parties to the CBM process was reiterated in the Final Declaration of the Fourth Review Conference ([BWC/CONF.IV/9](#)). This opened with States Parties solemnly declaring "Their determination to enhance the implementation and effectiveness of the Convention and to further strengthen its authority, including through the confidence-building measures agreed by the Second and Third Review Conferences". In accordance with the decision of the Third Review Conference, the Fourth Review Conference reviewed the effectiveness of the CBMs. States Parties welcomed the exchange of information carried out under the CBMs. The continued importance of the CBMs was noted,

as was their contribution to enhancing transparency and building confidence. Some scope for further improvement was, however, acknowledged. The Fourth Review Conference recognized that participation since the Third Review Conference had not been universal, and that not all responses had been prompt or complete. In this regard, States Parties recognized the technical difficulties experienced by some of their number with respect to preparing CBM responses. The Conference urged all States Parties to complete full and timely declarations in the future.

15. The Conference also noted that the Ad Hoc Group established by the 1994 Special Conference was, as part of its work, considering the incorporation of existing and further enhanced confidence-building and transparency measures, as appropriate, into a regime to strengthen the Convention. It is possible that this continuing work of the Ad Hoc Group was the main reason the Fourth Review Conference did not make any changes to the CBMs.

E. Fifth Review Conference (19 November–7 December 2001 and 11–22 November 2002)

16. Unlike earlier review conferences, the Fifth Review Conference did not adopt a Final Declaration. As a result, it took no decisions in relation to the CBMs.

F. Sixth Review Conference (20 November–8 December 2006)

17. The Sixth Review Conference commented on the CBMs in similar terms as the Fourth, welcoming the exchange of information and the contribution this made to enhancing transparency and building confidence, but noting the limited number of States Parties making an annual CBM submission. Despite proposals from several States Parties, the Conference did not reach agreement on revising or amending the CBM forms. But the Conference did recognise "the urgent need to increase the number of States Parties participating in CBMs" and "in order to update the mechanism of transmission of information"³, agreed on several specific measures concerning the procedural aspects of the CBMs, and gave related tasks to the newly-formed ISU. Significant changes to the previous arrangements included provision for electronic submission and publication of CBMs, nomination of a national contact point by States Parties, and a reminder notice to be sent to States Parties three months before the submission deadline.

18. The specific measures agreed by the Sixth Review Conference were as follows⁴:

(a) The Implementation Support Unit (ISU) within the United Nations Department [now Office] for Disarmament Affairs, with the assistance of interested States Parties, shall develop an electronic format of the existing CBM forms.

(b) Once completed, the electronic forms shall, with the consent of the State Party submitting them, be posted on a secure Internet site and made available for the use of States Parties, to be developed under the auspices of the ISU. The information thus supplied by a State Party must not be circulated further without the express permission of that State Party.

(c) States Parties are invited to submit forms using the electronic format. States Parties that wish to submit completed paper forms instead of electronic forms may do so. The ISU shall insert the submitted hard copy data in the secure Internet site with the consent of the State Party providing this data in order to make it electronically available to all States Parties.

(d) The ISU shall centralize requests and offers of assistance regarding the submission of CBMs.

³ BWC/CONF.VI/6, Part II, paragraph 24.

⁴ See BWC/CONF.VI/6, Part III, paragraph 8.

(e) The ISU shall regularly inform States Parties about CBM returns and provide statistics on the level of participation at the annual meetings of States Parties.

(f) States Parties shall designate a national point of contact in charge of preparing the submission of CBMs, the contact details of which shall be sent to the ISU.

(g) The ISU shall circulate to points of contact a notice informing States Parties of the deadline for submitting information under the information exchange procedure (15 April) at least three months prior to this deadline.

19. In addition, the Conference included the following CBM-related tasks in the mandate of the ISU⁵:

(a) Receiving and distributing confidence-building measures (CBMs) to/from States Parties;

(b) Sending information notices to States Parties regarding their annual submissions;

(c) Compiling and distributing data on CBMs and informing on participation at each Meeting of States Parties;

(d) Developing and maintaining a secure website on CBMs to be accessible only to States Parties;

(e) Serving as an information exchange point for assistance related to preparation of CBMs;

(f) Facilitating activities to promote participation in the CBM process, as agreed by the States Parties.

20. The Conference also agreed that the CBMs merited "further and comprehensive attention" at the Seventh Review Conference.

G. Seventh Review Conference (5-22 December 2011)

21. The Seventh Review Conference emphasized in similar terms as the Sixth Review Conference the importance of the exchange of information among States Parties through the CBMs. States Parties welcomed the exchange of information carried out under these measures and noted that this has contributed to enhancing transparency and building confidence. In addition, and in view of the small increase in the percentage of submissions by State Parties since the Sixth Review Conference, the Conference recognized the urgent need to increase the number of States Parties participating in CBMs and called upon all States Parties to participate annually. Moreover, it called upon States Parties that have not yet done so to designate a national point of contact responsible for preparing the submission of CBMs, in accordance with the decision of the Sixth Review Conference.

22. The Conference also recalled the procedures for submission and exchange of information and data as agreed at previous Conferences and recognised the technical difficulties experienced by some States Parties in completing full and timely submissions. The Conference urged those States Parties in a position to do so, to provide technical assistance and support, through training for instance, to those States Parties requesting it to assist them to complete their annual CBM submissions. Furthermore, the Conference noted the desirability of making the CBMs more user-friendly and stressed the need to ensure that they provide relevant and appropriate information to States Parties.

23. The specific measures agreed by the Seventh Review Conference were as follows⁶:

⁵ See [BWC/CONF.VI/6](#), Part III, paragraph 5 B.

⁶ See [BWC/CONF.VII/7](#), paragraph 25.

(a) to adopt revised reporting forms as the basis for all CBM submissions from States Parties⁷ (CBM D: 'Active promotion of contacts' was deleted);

(b) to consider during the 2012–2015 intersessional programme how to enable fuller participation in the CBMs;

(c) that the Implementation Support Unit shall, in cooperation with States Parties, continue to examine and develop options for electronic means of submission of CBMs.

24. The Seventh Review Conference reached agreement that the Meeting of Experts in 2012 and 2013 would prepare a factual report reflecting deliberations on CBMs to be considered by the respective Meeting of State Parties. The Conference also noted that the Eighth Review Conference would then consider the work and outcome of these meetings and decide on any further action.

H. 2012-2015 Intersessional programme

25. In accordance with the decision taken by the Seventh Review Conference, in 2012 and 2013 States Parties addressed the topic of "How to enable fuller participation in the CBMs". Discussions focussed in both years on addressing the practical and technical difficulties experienced by some States Parties in completing full and timely submissions. Accordingly, States Parties agreed to work to⁸:

(a) Find ways to improve participation, including through raising awareness and training;

(b) Make the CBM submissions more user-friendly;

(c) Promote their possible utility in improving domestic coordination and in enhancing domestic understanding of national activity to be reported in the CBMs;

(d) Provide further technical assistance and support to States Parties, on request, for preparing and submitting CBM submissions, including through bilateral cooperation on CBMs and the provision of assistance, using the national point of contact list available on the ISU website;

(e) Continue to develop the electronic CBM platform that was demonstrated at the Meeting of States Parties in 2014, including through collaborating with the ISU to test and refine the system;

(f) Further improve access by States Parties to the information submitted in CBMs by examining the financial and technical feasibility, benefits and implications of various means of making CBM submissions available in more UN languages;

(g) Convene regional seminars and workshops to promote awareness of CBMs and to provide an opportunity for States Parties to report on their difficulties and needs for assistance;

(h) Consider a "step-by-step" approach in CBM participation whereby States Parties submit CBM forms separately or one by one, as the information is collected and updated, working towards the end goal of updating and completing CBM submissions while upholding the Decisions of the Seventh Review Conference. In this approach, submitting a "less than perfect" CBM initially, and subsequently updating and completing it, would not have negative consequences.

26. In the course of their discussions, States Parties recognized the importance of annual exchanges of information to provide transparency and build mutual trust among them. As such, they agreed on the importance of all States Parties participating in, and reiterating to others the importance of, the CBMs. In addition, they noted the value of encouraging States Parties that have not participated regularly in the CBMs or have never participated, to share

⁷ The revised forms for the submission of Confidence Building Measures as agreed by the Seventh Review Conference can be found in [BWC/CONF.VII/7](#), Annex I.

⁸ See [BWC/MSP/2012/5](#), paragraph 42 and [BWC/MSP/2013/5](#), paragraph 46.

information on the specific reasons on why they do not participate. States Parties also noted the value of considering voluntarily making all, or part, of their CBM returns public.

27. States Parties also recalled that they are to designate a National Point of Contact as agreed at the Sixth Review Conference and reiterated at the Seventh Review Conference. Furthermore, they recognised the value of the Chairman writing each year to all States Parties to remind them of the call by the Seventh Review Conference to participate annually in the CBMs and to include in this reminder a request for information on issues affecting their participation in the CBMs.

I. Eighth Review Conference (7-25 November 2016)

28. The Eighth Review Conference emphasized in the same terms as the Seventh Review Conference the importance of the exchange of information among States Parties through the CBMs. States Parties welcomed the exchange of information carried out under these measures and noted that this has contributed to enhancing transparency and building confidence. The Conference also took note of initiatives by States Parties to promote confidence-building under the Convention.

29. The Eighth Review Conference recognized the urgent need to increase the number of States Parties participating in CBMs and called upon all States Parties to participate annually.

30. The Conference also noted that since the Seventh Review Conference, there had only been a slight increase in the percentage of States Parties submitting their CBMs. The Conference emphasised the importance of increasing and continuing participation in the CBMs. Moreover, it called upon States Parties that have not yet done so to designate a national point of contact responsible for preparing the submission of CBMs, in accordance with the decision of the Sixth Review Conference.

31. The Eighth Review Conference also recognised the technical difficulties experienced by some States Parties in completing full and timely submissions. The Conference urged those States Parties in a position to do so, to provide technical assistance and support, for example through training or workshops, to those States Parties requesting it to assist them to complete their annual CBM submissions.

32. The Eighth Review Conference noted the desirability of making the CBMs more user-friendly and stressed the need to ensure that they provide relevant and appropriate information to States Parties. Additionally, the Conference recalled the procedures for submission and exchange of information and data as agreed at previous Conferences.

33. The Eighth Review Conference renewed the mandate of the ISU agreed to at the Seventh Review Conference, *mutatis mutandis*, for the period from 2017 to 2021, which includes supporting States Parties in the exchange of CBMs.

J. 2018-2020 Intersessional programme

34. At the Eighth Review Conference, States Parties decided to hold annual meetings and that the first such meeting, in December 2017, would seek to make progress on issues of substance and process for the period before the next Review Conference, with a view to reaching consensus on an intersessional process.

35. The 2017 Meeting of States Parties reached consensus on a new intersessional programme from 2018 to 2020 including, *inter alia*, a Meeting of Experts on Strengthening National Implementation (MX3) which would consider among other topics 'CBM submissions in terms of quantity and quality'.

36. In accordance with the decision of the 2017 Meeting of States Parties, the mandate of the intersessional programme was to seek common understandings and effective action on a range of topics, including on the CBMs. While the Meetings of States Parties during the intersessional programme noted the value of the work of the Meetings of Experts

and also welcomed the substantive discussions that took place, no consensus could be reached on the deliberations including any possible outcomes.

37. A total of ten working papers have been submitted by States Parties on CBM topics during the 2018-2020 intersessional programme. The main proposals from these working papers are summarized below:

- Overcome technical difficulties of CBM submissions by, inter alia, establishing a cooperative network of relevant domestic stakeholders and advocating for a step-by-step approach to CBM submission which would benefit States Parties that have either never submitted a CBM report, or have difficulties in completing annual forms;⁹
- Make the CBM Cover Sheet (“Declaration form on Nothing to Declare or Nothing New to Declare for use in the information exchange” also known as Form 0) more user-friendly;¹⁰
- Revise CBM Form A, part 2 (i) to clarify that the request for information includes both military and civilian biodefense research and development programmes;¹¹
- Introduce a new CBM Form A, part 2 iv) entitled "Military biomedical activity conducted by a reporting State on the territory of other States";¹²
- Modify CBM Form E to include a request for short descriptions of national implementation measures;¹³
- Amend CBM Form E to include information on the export of genetically modified organisms and specific genetic elements linked to export-controlled microorganisms and toxins;¹⁴
- Address a potential reporting gap in CBM Measure G by requiring the reporting by States Parties of all known facilities that produce vaccines for the protection of humans on their territory or under their control, whether licensed by their own Government authority or by that of another State or region;¹⁵
- Supplement CBM Form G’s information on human vaccine production facilities with similar data on animal vaccine production facilities;¹⁶
- Given the limited time available in the formal Meetings of Experts, interested States Parties should consider convening open-ended, informal discussions with a view to developing a widely-supported package of proposals in time for the Ninth Review Conference. States Parties should focus primarily on refinements to the existing CBMs, to clarify reporting requirements or add detail, rather than new CBMs or major expansions, and should be mindful of avoiding significant increases in reporting burden.;¹⁷

II. Operation of the CBMs

38. The annual process of submitting, compiling and distributing the CBMs places operational requirements both on States Parties and on the ISU, as the supporting institution.

⁹ [BWC/MSP/2019/MX.3/WP.2/Rev.1](#) and [BWC/MSP/2017/WP.14](#).

¹⁰ [BWC/MSP/2018/MX.3/WP.3](#).

¹¹ [BWC/MSP/2018/MX.3/WP.3](#).

¹² [BWC/MSP/2020/WP.1](#).

¹³ [BWC/MSP/2018/MX.3/WP.3](#).

¹⁴ [BWC/MSP/2017/WP.9](#).

¹⁵ [BWC/MSP/2019/MX.3/WP.4](#) and [BWC/MSP/2017/WP.6](#).

¹⁶ [BWC/MSP/2020/WP.1](#)

¹⁷ [BWC/MSP/2018/MX.3/WP.3](#).

A. Undertakings by States Parties

39. As noted above, every State Party to the Convention is to provide a CBM return each and every year, even if it is only to acknowledge that it has nothing to declare or nothing new to declare. Returns are to use the CBM forms (BWC/CONF.VII/7, Annex I to the Final Document of the Seventh Review Conference), electronic versions of which are available from the BWC website (<https://www.un.org/disarmament/biological-weapons/confidence-building-measures>), or the electronic CBM platform introduced in 2018. The forms begin with a cover declaration to allow States Parties to indicate if they have "Nothing to Declare" or "Nothing New to Declare" for each of the six measures covered. Returns covering the previous calendar year are to be submitted to the ISU by 15 April every year. Returns can be—and are—submitted in any of the official languages of the United Nations.

40. Until 2006, there was no requirement for States Parties to nominate a national contact point for dealing with the CBMs. This has changed with the decision of the Sixth Review Conference that States Parties "shall designate a national point of contact in charge of preparing the submission of CBMs". Since that decision, as of January 2022 129 States Parties had nominated a national contact point.

41. As encouraged by the Seventh and reaffirmed by the Eighth Review Conference, a number of States Parties in a position to do so have offered to provide technical assistance and support to those States Parties requesting it to assist them to complete their annual CBM submissions. As of January 2022, such offers have been made by Canada, Cuba, Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Details of these offers of assistance are available in the Cooperation and Assistance Database on the BWC website.

B. Role of the Implementation Support Unit

42. Until 2006, as mandated by the decisions of the Review Conferences, UNODA received the CBM submissions from States Parties, and compiled them "in the form received" (i.e. without translation, editing, formatting, or any other alteration) into a single document. This document, typically over 1,000 pages in length and containing a mixture of all six official languages, was then printed and distributed to the permanent missions of States Parties in New York and Geneva. Late submissions from States Parties were published in addendum documents, which were produced and distributed in the same way. UNODA was not explicitly authorised to send reminders, to follow-up late or non-submission, or to provide assistance to help States Parties to complete and submit returns.

43. As noted above, the Sixth Review Conference substantially revised and updated the submission and distribution procedure, and gave responsibility for managing the CBM process to the newly established ISU within UNODA. Since 2007, the ISU has been administering the CBMs in accordance with the procedures laid down by the Conference. Specifically, the ISU:

- (a) Provides electronic versions of the blank CBM forms.
- (b) Sends a reminder notice to States Parties, three months before the 15 April annual submission deadline.
- (c) Receives CBM submissions from States Parties, and places them on the electronic CBM platform (<https://bwc-ecbm.unog.ch/>) which replaced the secure internet site established by the ISU in 2007. The platform enables the electronic submission of CBMs in all six languages and provides for data-search capabilities of CBMs. The platform also serves as the repository of all CBMs submitted since 1987. Reports are either made publicly accessible or for States Parties only, depending on the instruction of the submitting State Party.
- (d) Answers queries and provides guidance, on request, to States Parties on completing their CBM submissions, and facilitates the provision of assistance, where needed.

(e) Assists States Parties, on request, with any activities, workshops, etc, to promote or discuss the CBMs; and

(f) Provides basic statistical data on participation in the CBMs in its annual report to States Parties.

44. The ISU is not mandated to carry out any analysis of the content of CBM returns, and due to variations in the format and language of submissions, can only compile the most basic statistics on participation. These statistics, based on the information provided by States Parties in Form 0, are published in the ISU's annual reports to States Parties.

45. The ISU also submitted a background paper to the Meeting of Experts on Strengthening National Implementation in 2018 and provided an update in 2019.¹⁸ Additionally, the ISU suggested that some technical adjustments could be made to the CBM forms to make them more user-friendly and to make it easier to present the information contained in the CBMs to States Parties. In particular, the ISU noted that there are a number of differing approaches to completing the information in Form 0, for example when completing the box for “nothing new to declare”. Additionally, Part 1 of Form A includes two sub-questions (i) and (ii) which are not reflected in Form 0. These issues present challenges for the ISU in preparing an accurate data set for its annual reports. At the Ninth Review Conference, States Parties may consider revisions to Form 0 to make it more user-friendly and to reduce the scope for differing approaches to completing the information.

46. As one of the outputs of Council Decision 2012/421/CFSP, adopted on 23 July 2012 by the Council of the European Union, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs developed a revised *Guide to Participating in the Confidence-Building Measures of the Biological Weapons Convention*. While having no formal status, the document was prepared in accordance with the decision of the Seventh Review Conference and was intended to provide practical advice and guidance to officials responsible for preparing CBM submissions. The Guide includes:

- (a) Background information on the CBM process;
- (b) General advice for preparing to participate in the CBMs; and
- (c) Detailed guidance on gathering the specific information required for each form.

47. The document is available in all six official languages of the United Nations. A revised English version was made available in 2015 and revised Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish versions were made available in 2013. The Guide, which is available free to States Parties, can be downloaded from the BWC website (<https://www.un.org/disarmament/biological-weapons/confidence-building-measures>).

48. In addition, the ISU assists States Parties, upon request, with activities to promote or discuss the CBMs and provides basic guidance and assistance to States Parties with regard to the compilation and submission of CBMs. Furthermore, during its outreach activities the ISU raises awareness about the importance of participating in CBMs.

49. With funding from Canada, France, Germany Japan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union, the ISU has conducted several online CBM training sessions or provided tailored assistance to States Parties upon their request during 2020 and 2021. The support by the ISU is designed to respond to requests from these States Parties for assistance and guidance in preparing and submitting the annual CBM reports. National CBM experts from Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, South Africa and Switzerland have also participated in such training sessions and have shared their national experiences.

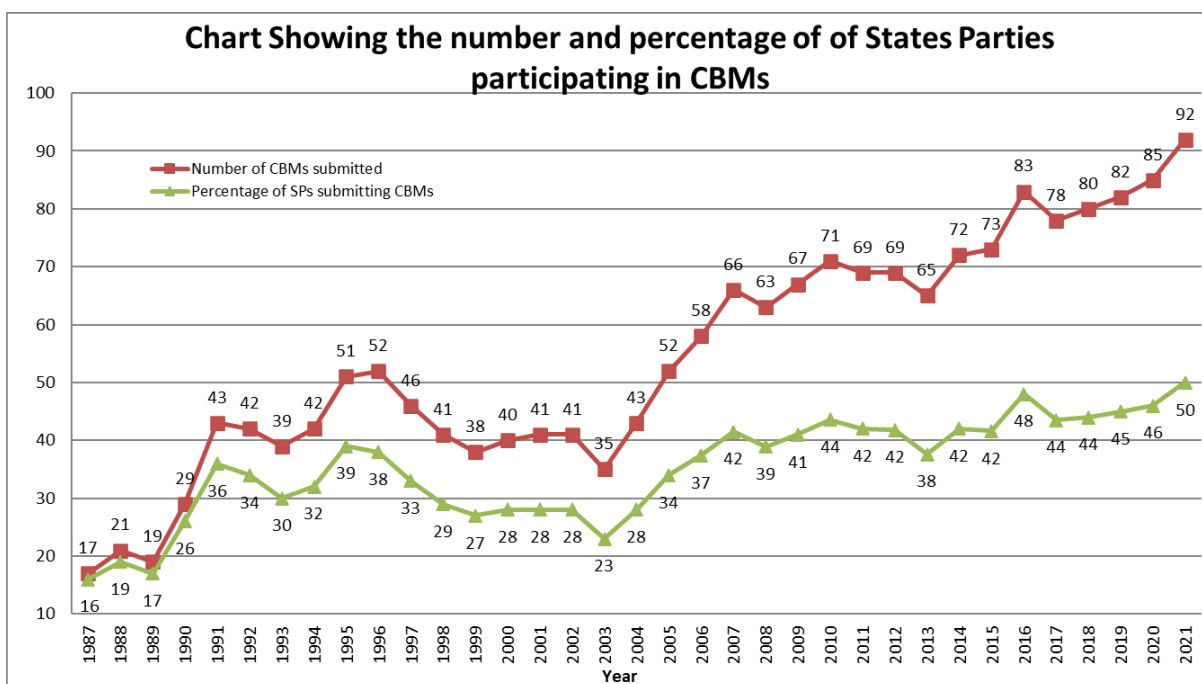
¹⁸ [BWC/MSP/2018/MX.3/2](#) and [Corr.1](#) and [BWC/MSP/2019/MX.3/INF.2](#).

C. Participation

50. The level of participation in the CBMs has increased overall since the Eighth Review Conference with the highest ever number of CBMs received from 92 States Parties in 2021. A total of 101 States Parties provided information between 2017 and 2021, with 65 of them having participated every year since the Eighth Review Conference. Eight States Parties have submitted CBMs for the first time since the Eighth Review Conference.¹⁹ Between 78 and 92 submissions were received annually between 2017 and 2021 with 35 to 40 percent of them made publicly available on the BWC website.

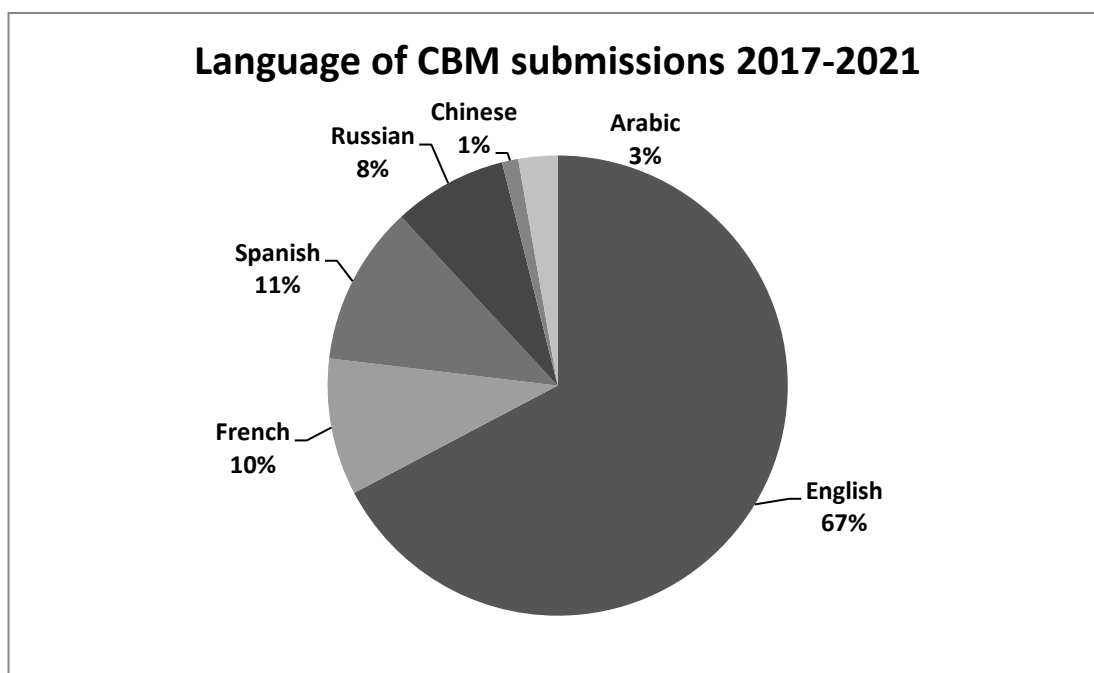
51. The number of States Parties that have submitted their CBMs via the eCBM platform has increased since 2019. 2021 saw the highest number of submissions directly through the eCBM platform with 21 States Parties having done so (i.e. 23 per cent of all submissions made).

52. Annex I shows data in summary tabular form on the participation of States Parties in the CBMs each year since the Seventh Review Conference, while Annex II presents information on CBM returns submitted since 1987. Additionally, the chart below presents the overall trend of CBM submissions by States Parties between 1987 and 2021.



53. As mentioned above, CBMs can be submitted in any official language and there is no budget for the CBMs to be translated into any other languages. The chart below gives details on the languages of submission of the 437 individual CBM reports submitted between 2017 and 2021.

¹⁹ Afghanistan, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Maldives, Mozambique, Suriname.



III. Conclusions

54. Since States Parties' agreement on the concept and general content of the CBMs during the Second Review Conference in 1986 and the first exchange of information and data in 1987, they have evolved over time with revisions made at the Third and Seventh Review Conferences.

55. While there has been over the course of the years a slow, but steady increase in the submissions made by States Parties, the overall level of participation remains low with less than half of all States Parties having regularly exchanged information and data. It was only in 2021 that the submissions made by States Parties reached fifty per cent for the first time. The ISU has received little information from States Parties that have not participated regularly in the CBMs or have never participated, on the specific reasons on why they do not participate.

56. As shown by the table in Annex I, a slight positive trend in States Parties' participation in the CBMs since the Eighth Review Conference can be noted. Both 2020 and 2021 saw new record numbers in submissions, which is also the result of increased outreach efforts by the ISU on CBMs and an heightened interest in participation by States Parties.

Annex I

[English only]

Participation in the CBMs since the Eighth Review Conference

	<i>State Party</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>
1	Afghanistan					x
2	Albania	x	x			
3	Algeria		x	x	x	x
4	Andorra					
5	Angola					
6	Antigua and Barbuda					
7	Argentina	x	x	x	x	x
8	Armenia	x	x	x	x	x
9	Australia	x	x	x	x	x
10	Austria	x	x	x	x	x
11	Azerbaijan	x	x			x
12	Bahamas					
13	Bahrain					
14	Bangladesh					
15	Barbados					
16	Belarus	x	x	x	x	x
17	Belgium	x	x	x	x	x
18	Belize					
19	Benin					
20	Bhutan	x	x	x	x	x
21	Bolivia					
22	Bosnia and Herzegovina	x	x		x	
23	Botswana					
24	Brazil	x	x	x	x	x
25	Brunei Darussalam				x	
26	Bulgaria	x	x	x	x	x
27	Burkina Faso					
28	Burundi					

	<i>State Party</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>
29	Cambodia					
30	Cameroon					
31	Canada	x	x	x	x	x
32	Cape Verde					
33	Central African Republic					
34	Chile	x	x	x	x	x
35	China	x	x	x	x	x
36	Colombia	x	x	x	x	x
37	Congo					
38	Cook Islands					
39	Costa Rica					
40	Côte d'Ivoire					
41	Croatia	x	x		x	x
42	Cuba	x	x	x	x	x
43	Cyprus	x	x	x	x	x
44	Czech Republic	x	x	x	x	x
45	Democratic People's Republic of Korea					
46	Democratic Republic of the Congo					
47	Denmark	x	x	x	x	x
48	Dominica					
49	Dominican Republic	x	x			
50	Ecuador	x	x	x	x	x
51	El Salvador		x	x	x	x
52	Equatorial Guinea					
53	Estonia	x	x	x	x	x
54	Eswatini					
55	Ethiopia					
56	Fiji					
57	Finland	x	x	x	x	x
58	France	x	x	x	x	x
59	Gabon					
60	Gambia					
61	Georgia	x	x	x	x	x

	<i>State Party</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>
62	Germany	x	x	x	x	x
63	Ghana					
64	Greece	x	x	x	x	x
65	Grenada					
66	Guatemala					x
67	Guinea					
68	Guinea-Bissau					
69	Guyana					
70	Holy See					
71	Honduras			x		
72	Hungary	x	x	x	x	x
73	Iceland					
74	India	x	x	x	x	x
75	Indonesia					
76	Iran (Islamic Republic of)					x
77	Iraq	x	x	x	x	x
78	Ireland	x	x	x	x	x
79	Italy	x	x	x	x	x
80	Jamaica					
81	Japan	x	x	x	x	x
82	Jordan	x	x	x	x	x
83	Kazakhstan	x	x	x	x	x
84	Kenya			x	x	x
85	Kuwait					
86	Kyrgyzstan	x		x	x	x
87	Lao People's Democratic Republic					
88	Latvia	x	x	x	x	x
89	Lebanon		x	x		
90	Lesotho					
91	Liberia					
92	Libya			x	x	x
93	Liechtenstein	x	x	x	x	x
94	Lithuania	x	x	x	x	x

	<i>State Party</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>
95	Luxembourg	x	x	x	x	x
96	Madagascar	x		x		
97	Malawi					
98	Malaysia	x	x	x	x	x
99	Maldives				x	x
100	Mali			x		x
101	Malta	x	x	x	x	x
102	Marshall Islands					
103	Mauritania					
104	Mauritius		x	x		x
105	Mexico	x	x	x	x	x
106	Monaco					
107	Mongolia					x
108	Montenegro	x	x	x	x	x
109	Morocco	x	x	x	x	x
110	Mozambique					x
111	Myanmar		x		x	
112	Nauru					
113	Nepal					
114	Netherlands	x	x	x	x	x
115	New Zealand	x		x	x	x
116	Nicaragua	x			x	x
117	Niger					
118	Nigeria			x	x	x
119	Niue					
120	Norway	x	x	x	x	x
121	North Macedonia					
122	Oman		x	x	x	x
123	Pakistan			x	x	x
124	Palau					
125	Panama					
126	Papua New Guinea					
127	Paraguay					

	<i>State Party</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>
128	Peru		x		x	x
129	Philippines	x	x	x	x	x
130	Poland	x	x	x	x	x
131	Portugal	x	x	x	x	x
132	Qatar	x	x	x	x	x
133	Republic of Korea	x	x	x	x	x
134	Republic of Moldova		x		x	x
135	Romania	x	x	x	x	x
136	Russian Federation	x	x	x	x	x
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	x	x	x	x	x
145	Senegal	x	x	x		x
146	Serbia	x	x	x	x	x
147	Seychelles	x			x	
148	Sierra Leone					
149	Singapore	x	x	x	x	x
150	Slovakia	x	x	x	x	x
151	Slovenia	x	x	x	x	x
152	Solomon Islands					
153	South Africa	x	x	x	x	x
154	Spain	x	x	x	x	x
155	Sri Lanka					
156	State of Palestine					
157	Sudan					
158	Suriname	x	x		x	x
159	Sweden	x	x	x	x	x
160	Switzerland	x	x	x	x	x

	<i>State Party</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>
161	Tajikistan					x
162	Tanzania (United Republic of)					
163	Thailand	x		x	x	x
164	Timor-Leste					
165	Togo					
166	Tonga					
167	Trinidad and Tobago					
168	Tunisia			x		x
169	Turkey	x	x	x	x	x
170	Turkmenistan					
171	Uganda					
172	Ukraine	x	x	x	x	x
173	United Arab Emirates	x	x	x	x	x
174	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	x	x	x	x	x
175	United States of America	x	x	x	x	x
176	Uruguay					
177	Uzbekistan	x	x	x	x	x
178	Vanuatu					
179	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)					
180	Viet Nam					
181	Yemen					
182	Zambia					
183	Zimbabwe					
	Totals	78	80	82	85	92

<i>State Party</i>	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21			
23 Botswana																																						0
24 Brazil					1		1	1	1	1	1		1		1	1		1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	25
25 Brunei Darussalam																					1	1					1								1		4	
26 Bulgaria		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	33	
27 Burkina Faso																																						0
28 Burundi																																						0
29 Cambodia																																						0
30 Cameroon																																				1		1
31 Canada	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	35	
32 Cape Verde																																						0
33 Central African Republic																																						0
34 Chile				1	1					1	1	1		1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	25	
35 China			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	33
36 Colombia												1														1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
37 Congo																																						0
38 Cook Islands																																						0
39 Costa Rica													1	1																							2	
40 Côte d'Ivoire																																						0
41 Croatia					1	1			1				1	1			1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	21	
42 Cuba					1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	31
43 Cyprus					1	1	1		1	1	1									1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	21
44 Czech Republic	1	1	1	1	1	1		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	33
45 Democratic People's Republic of Korea						1																																1
46 Democratic Republic of the Congo																																						0
47 Denmark	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1								1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	28	

<i>State Party</i>	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21				
48	Dominica																																					0	
49	Dominican Republic																																						2
50	Ecuador				1			1	1	1	1										1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	18	
51	El Salvador																																						4
52	Equatorial Guinea																																						0
53	Estonia							1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	26	
54	Eswatini																																						0
55	Ethiopia																									1													1
56	Fiji							1	1	1	1																												4
57	Finland	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	35	
58	France			1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	31	
59	Gabon																																						1
60	Gambia																							1	1													2	
61	Georgia														1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	21		
62	Germany	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	35	
63	Ghana																																						0
64	Greece				1	1			1	1										1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	20	
65	Grenada																																						1
66	Guatemala																																						1
67	Guinea																																						0
68	Guinea-Bissau																																						0
69	Guyana																																						0
70	Holy See																																						0
71	Honduras																																						1
72	Hungary	1				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	30	
73	Iceland					1		1	1																														3
74	India																																						15
75	Indonesia																																						4

State Party	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
76 Iran (Islamic Republic of)												1	1			1				1	1	1	1	1	1			1						1	11	
77 Iraq							1		1	1	1											1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	18
78 Ireland	1		1	1			1		1	1	1					1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	23
79 Italy			1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	32
80 Jamaica																									1										1	
81 Japan	1			1	1	1			1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	30	
82 Jordan						1			1	1										1		1				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	14	
83 Kazakhstan																					1			1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	
84 Kenya																							1	1	1		1	1	1			1	1	1	9	
85 Kuwait										1																									1	
86 Kyrgyzstan							1													1							1	1		1		1	1	1	8	
87 Lao People's Democratic Republic									1														1												2	
88 Latvia																1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	20	
89 Lebanon																					1	1	1	1		1		1		1	1			9		
90 Lesotho																																			0	
91 Liberia																																			0	
92 Libya																						1	1	1							1	1	1	12		
93 Liechtenstein														1	1		1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	19		
94 Lithuania														1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	22		
95 Luxembourg								1		1	1	1							1	1	1		1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	18		
96 Madagascar																									1				1		1			3		
97 Malawi																												1						1		
98 Malaysia																				1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	13		
99 Maldives																																1	1	2		
100 Mali												1																			1		1	3		
101 Malta						1		1	1	1		1		1					1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	24		
102 Marshall Islands																																			0	
103 Mauritania																																			0	

<i>State Party</i>	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		
104 Mauritius																		1	1	1	1	1	1					1	1		1	1		1	11		
105 Mexico				1		1		1										1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	19	
106 Monaco																																				0	
107 Mongolia				1		1	1	1	1																											1	6
108 Montenegro																			1	1									1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	
109 Morocco																		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	17	
110 Mozambique																																				1	1
111 Myanmar																													1		1		1			3	
112 Nauru																																				0	
113 Nepal																																				0	
114 Netherlands	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	35	
115 New Zealand	1	1	1	1		1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	32	
116 Nicaragua							1																				1			1				1	1	5	
117 Niger																																				0	
118 Nigeria																					1	1											1	1	1	5	
119 Niue																																				0	
120 Norway	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	35	
121 North Macedonia					1	1																		1												3	
122 Oman																	1													1		1	1	1	1	6	
123 Pakistan																											1						1	1	1	4	
124 Palau																																				0	
125 Panama					1																															1	
126 Papua New Guinea																	1																			1	
127 Paraguay										1																										1	
128 Peru					1	1										1												1	1	1	1		1	1	1	10	
129 Philippines					1																										1	1	1	1	1	6	
130 Poland	1	1			1			1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	30		
131 Portugal				1	1			1	1	1										1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	21	
132 Qatar					1				1	1		1						1				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	19	

<i>State Party</i>	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21			
181 Yemen																								1		1	1										3	
182 Zambia																																						0
183 Zimbabwe																											1											1
	17	21	19	29	43	42	39	42	51	52	46	41	38	40	41	41	35	43	52	58	66	63	67	71	69	69	65	72	73	83	78	80	82	85	92			
