

**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**

9 December 2022

English only

Geneva, 28 November to 16 December 2022

Item 12 of the agenda

**Follow-up to the recommendations and decisions of the Eighth Review
Conference and the question of future review of the Convention**

**International cooperation, assistance and exchange in the use
of biological sciences and technology for peaceful purposes.
Proposal for the establishment of a Cooperation Committee**

**Submitted by the Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Group of the
Non-Aligned Movement and Other States Parties to the BWC**

Summary

The BWC States Parties have demonstrated a consensual understanding that fostering cooperation is vital for the implementation of the Convention at the national level. New initiatives for improving international cooperation in the use of biological sciences and technology for peaceful purposes have been appreciated at the Ninth Review Conference, in order to supplement the already existing mechanisms. Aiming at fostering complementarity and synergies among these initiatives and helping to achieve an efficient matchmaking between offers of and requests for cooperation, the NAM proposes to establish a Cooperation Committee to perform an overview function of the cooperation activities developed under the BWC framework.



I. Context and Mandate

1. During the last Intersessional Program (2018-2020), especially during the discussions of the Meeting of Experts on Cooperation and Assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance (MX1), States Parties submitted a number of working papers to develop initiatives for improving international cooperation, assistance and exchange in the use of biological sciences and technology for peaceful purposes. This renewed commitment by all States Parties demonstrates a consensual understanding that fostering cooperation is vital for the full and effective implementation of the Convention.
2. The Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States (NAM) expects that the Ninth Review Conference will approve by consensus an efficient and well-adapted tool to overview the already existing and future mechanisms and channels for cooperation under the BWC framework.
3. It is of utmost importance to all States Parties to foster complementarity and synergies among cooperation initiatives within the BWC framework, promoting non-discriminatory and equitable access, as well as saving scarce human, material and financial resources. Additionally, an efficient matchmaking between offers of and needs and requests for cooperation depends on a continuous supervision of these important activities by the States Parties.
4. To this effect, the proposal of a Cooperation Committee by the NAM assumes greater urgency. The Cooperation Committee will oversee current and future cooperation initiatives developed under the BWC framework, including financial, human and material resources allocated to these activities.

II. Structure and Governance

5. The Cooperation Committee shall function as a “steering committee”, integrated by rotating positions among BWC States Parties. The composition of the Committee will reflect the proportion of States Parties in current and future regional informal groups of the BWC. Each regional group will nominate their respective representatives. The NAM is flexible to proceed further discussion on the composition of the Steering Committee of the Cooperation Committee.
6. Each member of the Cooperation Committee will receive an indefinitely renewable two-year term mandate, pursuant to the decision of the respective regional group. The annual Presidency of the Cooperation Committee will be performed by one representative of the committee, by a system of rotation among regional groups.
7. The mandate of the Cooperation Committee will be reviewed by each BWC Review Conference, whereas updates regarding its work will be addressed as an agenda point in the Meeting of States Parties.
8. The Cooperation Committee will meet at least annually, on the margins of the Meeting of States Parties. The Presidency of the Cooperation Committee through the Chief of the Implementation Support Unit will inform its members in advance about the time and place of the meetings. Since the States Parties participating in the Cooperation Committee can be represented in these events by the same delegation for the BWC regular meetings, no additional financial costs to BWC States Parties are expected for the functioning of the committee.

III. Implementation

9. If States Parties agree on the creation of a Cooperation Committee under the BWC framework, the NAM submits to the assessment of States Parties the following draft paragraphs to be included in the outcome document of the Ninth Review Conference:

“The BWC States Parties decide to establish a Cooperation Committee, with the mandate to facilitate the international cooperation activities developed under the BWC framework.”

The Cooperation Committee will facilitate matchmaking between offers of and requests for cooperation and assistance, among States Parties and with international organizations, and foster complementarity and synergies of cooperation initiatives, taking into consideration the information available at the Article X database.

The Cooperation Committee will be responsible for an overview function of all cooperation activities under the BWC framework, as well as of financial, human and material resources allocated by States Parties to these activities.

The Cooperation Committee will work towards unhindered access to equipment, materials and scientific and technological information required for research in biosafety and biosecurity activities, as well as to mediate the process of opening new means of cooperation between States Parties, especially concerning the exchange of medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and other use of biological agents, equipment and materials for peaceful purposes, in particular for the treatment of patients in developing countries.

The Cooperation Committee will be composed of 10 or more members, selected through rotation among the BWC States Parties, reflecting the proportion of States Parties in current and future regional informal groups of the BWC. The meetings of the Cooperation Committee shall be conveyed in English so as that minimal financial costs to the BWC States Parties are expected for the functioning of the committee. The Committee shall also be funded through voluntary contributions or specific funds dedicated to cooperation under Article X.

Each member of the Cooperation Committee will receive an indefinitely renewable two-year term mandate, pursuant to the decision of the respective regional group. The annual Presidency of the Cooperation Committee will be performed by one representative of the Committee, by a system of rotation among regional groups.

On an annual basis, the ISU will call for project proposals by States requiring cooperation and assistance. The ISU shall present a preparatory report of all project proposals received by the due date, relying on outside expertise as appropriate and needed, for presenting to the Cooperation Committee.

The Cooperation Committee will meet formally at least once a year, and informally as frequent as decided by the Presidency and members of the Cooperation Committee.

The Cooperation Committee will report to and receive guidance from the Meeting of State Parties (MSP) of the BWC and from the BWC Review Conferences. The States Parties of the BWC will decide on the composition of the Cooperation Committee, as well as on its presidency during the Meeting of State Parties (MSP) of the BWC. The mandate of the Cooperation Committee will be reviewed by each BWC Review Conference, whereas updates regarding its work will be addressed as an agenda point of all relevant BWC States Parties' meetings.

In its first mandate, the Cooperation Committee will be composed of the following States Parties:

- (a) Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States – [...];*
- (b) Western Group – [...];*
- (c) Eastern European Group – [...];*
- (d) [...]*

Under the Presidency of [...].”