



The Biological Weapons Convention

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Weapons of mass destruction (WMD)

Biological weapons

Chemical weapons

Nuclear weapons



Conventions and treaties against WMD



NUCLEAR

***Treaty on the Non-
Proliferation of
Nuclear Weapons
(NPT)***

1968 (1970)



BIOLOGICAL

***Biological Weapons
Convention (BWC)***

1972 (1975)



CHEMICAL

***Chemical Weapons
Convention
(CWC)***

1993 (1997)



***Comprehensive
Nuclear Test Ban
Treaty (CTBT)***

1996

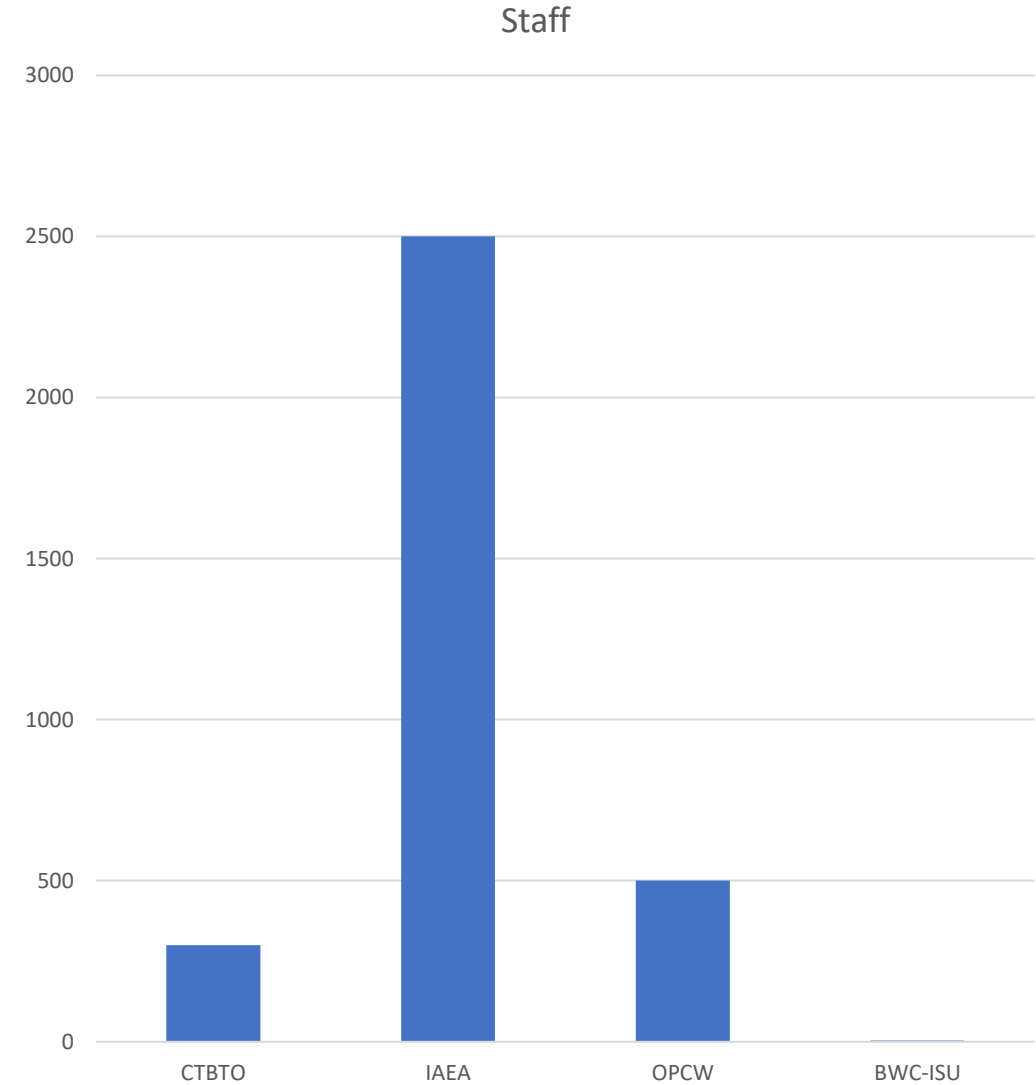


***Treaty on the
Prohibition of
Nuclear
Weapons***

2017 (2021)

International bodies were established with the primary objective of preventing the proliferation, development, and use of WMD.

Their mandates include enforcing treaties, conducting inspections, promoting disarmament, and ensuring peaceful uses of related technologies.



The Biological Weapons Convention

- **What is it?**
 - It is a key element in the global security architecture, established to prevent the development, production, and stockpiling of biological and toxin weapons.
- **Since when?**
 - Adopted in 1972 and entered into force in 1975, it was the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction.
- **Why is it important?**
 - The BWC currently has 187 States Parties, committing to the prohibition of biological weapons and promoting peaceful cooperation in the field of biology.

Why is the BWC relevant in 2024

- Catastrophic potential of biological threats through the COVID-19 pandemic
- Exponential development in Artificial Intelligence: BDT, Generative AI, LLMs, Cloud Labs, etc.



Why is the BWC relevant in 2024

- The BWC has gained the attention of policymakers for its critical role in global security, geopolitics, and economic stability.
- Governments must examine and evaluate existing WMD conventions to determine if they are suitable for this new technological era
- Following the Ninth BWC Review Conference in 2022, State Parties decided to develop a Working Group to provide recommendations on the Strengthening of the Convention .



Fourth session 19-23 August	Assistance, Response & Preparedness	Assistance, Response & Preparedness	Assistance, Response & Preparedness	Scientific & Technological Developments	International Cooperation & Assistance
Fifth session (first week) 2-6 December	Assistance, Response & Preparedness	Confidence- Building & Transparency	Compliance & Verification	Compliance & Verification	Organizational, Institutional & Financial
Fifth session (second week) 9-13 December	International Cooperation & Assistance Mechanism	S&T Review Mechanism	Compliance & Verification	Overall consideration of all topics as contained in paragraphs 8, 18 and 19	

Two Mechanisms are advanced in conversations



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
AND ASSISTANCE

Science and Technology Mechanism



Particularly beneficial to States Parties that lack domestic capacities to continuously monitor latest scientific developments.



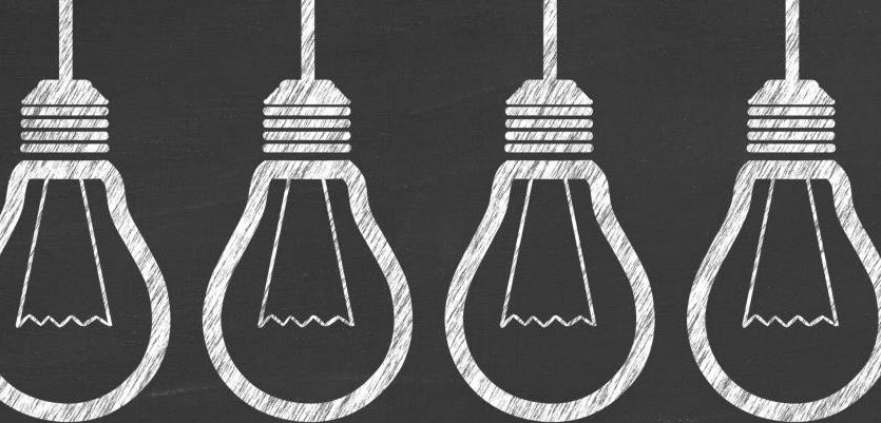
During negotiations, the lack of real-time scientific advice has led to delays in reaching consensus on critical issues, such as the regulation of dual-use technologies.



Without scientific input, the policy frameworks could fail to keep pace with rapid technological advancements, leaving loopholes that could be exploited by malicious actors.



This mechanism could improve the BWC's effectiveness, enhance transparency, and increase trust among State Parties by providing independent scientific advice, identifying potential loopholes, and proposing updates to the BWC framework.



Would such a mechanism alone be sufficient to ensure global biosecurity?

- It is a critical first step towards a new vision for the BWC.

What could be a vision for the BWC? Suggestions include:

- Creating transparent and reliable information-sharing platforms for real-time reporting among States Parties, conducting on-site investigations and inspections, and preparing laboratory networks to address emerging and future biological risks.
- It also could involve establishing conference series to foster innovation and laboratories prepared to handle contemporary and future biological threats.



What is next for Science and Tech this year at the BWC?

- Decisions now rest in the hands of State Parties.
 - Your governments will discuss in December 2024 what role science will play in the BWC negotiations.
 - Many SPs see the creation of a science advisory mechanism for the BWC as an essential part of the puzzle to ensure a future-proof BWC.
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Thank you...



<https://disarmament.unoda.org/biological-weapons/>



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Definitions

- Bioweapons: Biological and toxin weapons are either microorganisms like virus, bacteria or fungi, or toxic substances produced by living organisms that are produced and released deliberately to cause disease and death in humans, animals or plants. [Biological weapons \(who.int\)](#)

Biological weapons



Chemical Weapons



“Biological weapons”

Genetically modified biologicals

Toxins

Bioregulators

Industrial chemicals

“Chemical weapon”

Chemicals

Agents of biological origin

Infectious agents

Poison

Biological weapons convention (Art. I)

Chemical weapons convention (Art. II)