

**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**

16 December 2022

English only

Geneva, 28 November – 16 December 2022

**Draft Final Document of the Ninth Review
Conference***

* Any entry listed in this document does not imply the expression of any opinion regarding, and is without prejudice to, the legal status of any country or territory or of its authorities.

I. Organization and work of the Conference

A. Introduction

1. The Final Document of the Eighth 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 (BWC/CONF.VIII/4), in paragraph 77 of the Final Declaration, contained the following decision:

“The Conference decides that the Ninth Review Conference shall be held in Geneva not later than 2021 and should review the operation of the Convention, taking into account, *inter alia*:

- (a) new scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention;
- (b) the progress made by States Parties on the implementation of the Convention;

and

- (c) progress of the implementation of decisions and recommendations agreed upon at the Eighth Review Conference, taking into account, as appropriate, decisions and recommendations reached at previous review conferences.”

2. The final report of the 2020 Meeting of States Parties considered the arrangements for the Ninth Review Conference and its Preparatory Committee and contained the following decisions:

“29. As reflected in the reports of the 2020 Meetings of Experts and this report, the 2020 meetings were postponed several times due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2018-2020 intersessional programme could therefore not be concluded as originally planned in 2020.

30. In May 2021, States Parties therefore agreed by written silence procedure that several technical recommendations would be submitted for formal consideration and approval by the appropriate upcoming BWC meetings. In this regard, the Meeting of States Parties decided that the Preparatory Committee would be held in Geneva in in-person format in accordance with the regular practice under the BWC on 20 December 2021. It was agreed that this meeting would consider the agenda items on the organizational aspects of the Review Conference.

31. While acknowledging that the Eighth Review Conference in 2016 decided that “the Ninth Review Conference shall be held in Geneva not later than 2021”, the Meeting of States Parties, taking into account the extraordinary circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, exceptionally and without setting a precedent, agreed the following technical adjustments:

(a) the Ninth Review Conference would be held in Geneva in in-person format in accordance with the regular practice under the BWC from 8 to 26 August 2022.”

3. Subsequently, at its meeting on 11 April 2022, the Preparatory Committee decided that:

“29. Taking into account the extraordinary circumstances, the Preparatory Committee reconsidered the decision of the 2020 Meeting of States Parties and decided that the Ninth Review Conference should take place in Geneva from 28 November to 16 December 2022.”

4. By resolution 76/67, adopted without a vote on 6 December 2021, and resolution 77/95, adopted without a vote on 7 December 2022, the General Assembly, *inter alia*, requested the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the Depositary Governments of the Convention and to provide such services as may be required for the conduct and the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the review conferences.

5. The Preparatory Committee convened and held two meetings in Geneva on 20 December 2021 and then resumed its work from 4 to 11 April 2022 during which time it held 12 meetings. The following 115 delegations participated in the Preparatory Committee: Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bosnia

and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

6. On behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Peter Kolarov, Political Affairs Officer, Office for Disarmament Affairs, opened the Preparatory Committee on 20 December 2021. Mr. Daniel Feakes, Chief of the Implementation Support Unit, served as Secretary of the Preparatory Committee. Mr. Hermann Lampalzer, Deputy Chief, Implementation Support Unit, Ms. Ngoc Phuong van der Blij, Political Affairs Officer, Implementation Support Unit and Ms. María José Orellana Alfaro, Documents Management Assistant served in the Secretariat.

7. At its meeting on 20 December 2021, the Preparatory Committee unanimously elected Mr. Florian Antohi of Romania and Mr. Tancredi Francese of Italy as Vice-Chairs of the Preparatory Committee. The Preparatory Committee authorized the Bureau to handle technical and other matters in the period before the Review Conference was convened.

8. At its meeting on 8 April 2022, the Preparatory Committee took note of the decision of the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States Parties to the BWC to hand over the presidency of the Ninth Review Conference and to retain its rotational right to preside over the Tenth Review Conference.

9. At the same meeting, Australia, as Coordinator of the Western Group, advised that the capacity of the Group to nominate for the position of President of the Review Conference was linked to the question of the dates of the Review Conference. The Coordinator further advised that this was a product of the need for any incoming President to have sufficient time to undertake the necessary preparations for the Review Conference. It also reflected the demands on delegations within the Western Group connected with the disarmament calendar for 2022.

10. The Coordinator of the Western Group presented the nomination of Mr. Leonardo Bencini, Ambassador and Permanent Representative-Designate of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament, for the position of President of the Ninth Review Conference. The Coordinator also specified that Ambassador Bencini's capacity to fulfil this role was subject to a decision by the Preparatory Committee that the Ninth Review Conference shall be held from 28 November to 16 December 2022, in order to ensure him time to undertake the necessary preparations and consultations.

11. The Preparatory Committee agreed to recommend to the Ninth Review Conference that Mr. Leonardo Bencini, Ambassador and Permanent Representative-Designate of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament, preside over the Conference, on the understanding that the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and other States Parties to the BWC decided to retain its rotational right to preside over the Tenth Review Conference.

12. The Preparatory Committee decided to take its decisions by consensus.

13. The Preparatory Committee decided to use Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish as official languages.

14. The Preparatory Committee, in accordance with draft rule 44, paragraph 1, noted the participation, without the right to take part in the adoption of decisions, of one State that had signed the Convention but had not yet ratified it, the Syrian Arab Republic.

15. The Preparatory Committee, taking note of written requests and in accordance with the draft rule 44, paragraph 2, decided to invite the representatives of two States neither party nor signatory to the Convention, Israel and Namibia, to participate as observers.

16. In the course of its session, the Preparatory Committee considered the following questions relating to the organization of the Review Conference:

- (a) Date and duration;
- (b) Provisional agenda;
- (c) Draft rules of procedure;
- (d) Background documentation;
- (e) Publicity;
- (f) Final document(s);
- (g) Appointment of a provisional Secretary-General; and
- (h) Financial arrangements for the Preparatory Committee and the Review Conference.

17. At its meeting on 20 December 2021, the Preparatory Committee adopted its interim report by consensus, as contained in document BWC/CONF.IX/PC/2. At its meeting, on 11 April 2022, the Preparatory Committee adopted its final report by consensus, as contained in document BWC/CONF.IX/PC/10.

18. Pursuant to the request of the Preparatory Committee, the following background documents were prepared by the Implementation Support Unit and issued as pre-session documents for the Conference:

(a) A background information document on the history and operation of the confidence-building measures agreed at the Second Review Conference and revised at the Third and Seventh Review Conferences. The document should include data in summary tabular form on the participation of States Parties in the measures since the last Review Conference;

(b) A background information document on the overall financial status of the Convention and implications of proposals for follow-on action after the Ninth Review Conference;

(c) A background information document showing the additional understandings and agreements reached by previous Review Conferences relating to each article of the Convention, extracted from the respective Final Declarations of these conferences;

(d) A background information document showing the common understandings reached by the Meetings of States Parties during the intersessional programme held from 2017 to 2020;

(e) A background information document on the status of universalization of the Convention;

(f) A background information document on compliance by States Parties with all their obligations under the Convention, to be compiled from information submitted by States Parties;

(g) A background information document on the implementation of Article VII, to be compiled from information submitted by States Parties;

(h) A background information document on the implementation of Article X, to be compiled from information submitted by States Parties, including information submitted pursuant to paragraph 61 of the Final Declaration of the Seventh Review Conference;

(i) A background information document on new scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention, to be compiled from information submitted by States Parties.

B. Organization of the Conference

19. In accordance with the decision of the Preparatory Committee, the Conference was convened at the Palais des Nations in Geneva from 28 November to 16 December 2022.

20. On behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, opened the Conference.

21. At its first meeting, on 28 November 2022, the Conference elected by acclamation Ambassador Leonardo Bencini of Italy as President.

22. At the same meeting, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Antonio Guterres, addressed the Conference via a video message.

23. The Conference adopted its agenda as recommended by the Preparatory Committee (BWC/CONF.IX/1). The agenda as adopted is attached as Annex I to this Final Document.

24. The Conference took note with appreciation of the final report of the Preparatory Committee (BWC/CONF.IX/PC/10).

25. The Conference adopted its Rules of Procedure as recommended by the Preparatory Committee (BWC/CONF.IX/2). The Rules of Procedure provided, *inter alia*, for:

(a) a General Committee, chaired by the President of the Conference, and composed of the President, the 20 Vice-Presidents, the Chair and the two Vice-Chairs of the Committee of the Whole, the Chair and the two Vice-Chairs of the Drafting Committee, the Chair and the Vice-Chairs of the Credentials Committee, the three Regional Group Coordinators and the Depositaries (see paragraph 33 of the report of the Preparatory Committee);

(b) a Committee of the Whole;

(c) a Drafting Committee; and

(d) a Credentials Committee composed of a Chair and Vice-Chair elected by the Conference, and five other members appointed by the Conference on the proposal of the President.

26. The Conference elected by acclamation 20 Vice-Presidents from the following States Parties: Brazil, Canada, China, Croatia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Guatemala, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Malawi, Panama, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland. It also elected by acclamation the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Committee of the Whole, the Drafting Committee and the Credentials Committee, as follows:

Committee of the Whole

Chair: Ambassador Tatiana Molcean (Republic of Moldova)

Vice-Chair: Mr. Andreas Bilgeri (Austria)

Vice-Chair: Mr. Angel Horna (Peru)

Drafting Committee

Chair: Ms. Sara Lindegren (Sweden)

Vice-Chair: Mr. Ljupčo Gjorgjinski (North Macedonia)

Vice-Chair: Mr. Jonelle John Domingo (Philippines)

Credentials Committee

Chair: Mr. Angus September (South Africa)

Vice-Chair: Mr. Ali Sezgin Isilak (Türkiye)

The Conference also appointed the following five States Parties as members of the Credentials Committee: Finland, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea and Serbia.

27. The Conference noted the decision of one State Party to withdraw from the Eastern European Group as contained in BWC/CONF.IX/WP.46 and to establish a new regional group under the Convention, consisting of that State Party, and functioning in accordance with the practice of the Convention on a non-discriminatory basis as the other regional groups. The Conference reaffirms the importance of the principle of equitable geographical representation within the Convention. The Conference noted that this State Party indicated that this withdrawal does not set a precedent, concerns only the work within the Convention and has no consequences outside of it, with regard to the work of UN bodies or the membership in the Eastern European Group within the UN.

28. The Conference confirmed the nomination of Mr. Daniel Feakes, Chief of the Implementation Support Unit, as Secretary-General of the Conference. The nomination had been made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations following an invitation by the Preparatory Committee. Mr. Hermann Alex Lampalzer, Deputy Chief, Implementation Support Unit, Ms. Ngoc Phuong van der Blij, Political Affairs Officer, Implementation Support Unit, Ms. María José Orellana Alfaro, Documents Management Assistant, Ms. Wenjie Wang, Administrative Assistant, Ms. Mariia Koroleva, Individual Contractor, Ms. Barbara Hemmerle, Political Affairs Intern, Ms. Swann Jin, Political Affairs Intern, Mr. Nils Justen, Political Affairs Intern and Mr. Ryan Teo, Political Affairs Intern all served in the Secretariat.

C. Participation at the Conference

29. The following 137 delegations participated in the Conference: Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

30. In addition, two States that had signed the Convention but had not yet ratified it participated in the Conference without taking part in the making of decisions, as provided for in rule 44, paragraph 1 of the Rules of Procedure: Egypt and the Syrian Arab Republic.

31. Four States, Comoros, Djibouti, Israel and South Sudan, neither parties nor signatories to the Convention, were granted Observer status in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 2 (a) of the Rules of Procedure.

32. The United Nations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the United Nations Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries (UNTBLC) attended the Conference in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 3 of the Rules of Procedure.

33. The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) the European Union (EU), the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) were granted Observer Agency status in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 4 of the Rules of Procedure.

34. Forty-eight non-governmental organizations and research institutes attended the Conference under rule 44, paragraph 5 of the Rules of Procedure.

D. Work of the Conference

35. The Conference held 15 plenary meetings between 28 November and 16 December 2022.

36. At its first plenary meeting, on 28 November 2022, the Conference adopted its indicative programme of work, as set out in BWC/CONF.IX/3.

37. The Conference held a general debate, in which the following delegations made statements: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan (on behalf of the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States), Belarus (on behalf of the Collective Security Treaty Organization), Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia (on behalf of Association of Southeast Asian Nations), Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia (on behalf of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Germany (on behalf of the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction), Guatemala, Holy See, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Russian Federation (on behalf of the Commonwealth of Independent States), Russian Federation (on behalf of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation), Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, State of Palestine, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor Leste, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zambia. Statements were also made by the European Union, the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, the United Nations Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries, the World Organization for Animal Health, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Interpol.

38. The Committee of the Whole held 11 meetings between 30 November and 12 December during which it reviewed the provisions of the Convention, article by article. The Committee submitted its report BWC/CONF.IX/COW/CRP.1 to the Conference at its plenary meeting on 13 December 2022. The Conference took note of the report to be issued as document BWC/CONF.IX/COW/1.

39. During the Conference, the President conducted a series of informal consultations, and was assisted in his work by Facilitators in the following areas:

Assistance and cooperation (Article X): Ambassador Maria Teresa Almojuela (Philippines)

Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention: Mr. Ljupčo Gjorgjinski (North Macedonia)

National implementation: Ms. Grisselle del Carmen Rodriguez Ramirez (Panama)

Assistance, response and preparedness (Article VII): Ms. Tiyamike Banda (Malawi)

Future intersessional work programme: Mr. Tancredi Francese (Italy)

Finances and the ISU: Ms. Henriëtte van Gulik (Netherlands)

40. The Drafting Committee held no formal meetings.

41. The Credentials Committee held three meetings. At its third and final meeting on 14 December 2022 the Credentials Committee adopted its report as contained in document BWC/CONF.IX/CC/CRP.1 to be issued as document BWC/CONF.IX/CC/1. The Conference took note of the report.

E. Documentation

42. A list of documents of the Conference is contained in Annex II of this Final Document. All documents on this list are available on the BWC website at <https://meetings.unoda.org/bwc-revcon/biological-weapons-convention-ninth-review-conference-2022> and through the United Nations Official Document System (ODS), at <http://documents.un.org>.

F. Conclusion of the Conference

43. At its sixteenth and final plenary meeting, on 16 December 2022, the Conference adopted by consensus its Final Document, as contained in document BWC/CONF.IX/CRP.2/Rev.2, [as orally amended] comprising two parts and two annexes, as follows:

Part I: Organization and work of the Conference

Part II: Decisions and recommendations

Annex I: Agenda of the Conference

Annex II: List of documents of the Conference

II. Decisions and recommendations

A. Outcome of the 2017 - 2020 intersessional programme

1. In accordance with the decision taken by the Eighth Review Conference, the 2017 Meeting of States Parties discussed issues of substance and process for the period before the Ninth Review Conference and reached consensus on an intersessional process, as reflected in Section V of its Report (BWC/MSP/2017/6).

2. The Conference notes that the Meetings of States Parties and Meetings of Experts functioned as an important forum for exchange of national experiences and in-depth deliberations among States Parties. The Meetings of States Parties engendered greater common understanding on steps to be taken to further strengthen the implementation of the Convention and considered several proposals on how to reflect the deliberations, including on any possible outcomes, of the Meetings of Experts, but the consideration was inconclusive. However, the Conference regrets that no consensus was reached on the deliberations, including on any possible outcomes, of the Meetings of Experts.

3. The Conference notes the contribution by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) and other relevant international organisations, as well as scientific and academic institutions and non-governmental organisations, to the Meetings of States Parties and Meetings of Experts.

B. Intersessional programme for 2023 – 2026

Meetings of the States Parties

4. Reaffirming the utility of having an intersessional programme, the Conference decides that States Parties will hold annual meetings between 2023 and 2026 in Geneva, in in-person format in accordance with the regular practice under the Convention, for a duration of three days each year. The first such meeting will be held from 11 to 13 December 2023.

5. The Conference decides that the Meetings of States Parties will be responsible for managing the intersessional programme in support of the Convention, including taking necessary actions with respect to budgetary, financial and organisational matters, with a view to ensuring the proper implementation of the intersessional programme. The Meetings of the States Parties will also consider, on an annual basis, progress on universalisation of the Convention, the annual report of the Implementation Support Unit and, as appropriate, the implementation of decisions taken by the Conference.

6. The Conference decides that the 2024 Meeting of the States Parties will be chaired by a representative of the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States. The Chairperson will be supported by two Vice-Chairpersons.

7. The Tenth Review Conference will consider the work and outcomes of these meetings and decide on any further action.

Working Group on the strengthening of the Convention

8. Determined to strengthen the effectiveness and to improve the implementation of the Convention in all its aspects, the Conference decides to establish a Working Group open to all States Parties.

The aim of the Working Group is to identify, examine and develop specific and effective measures, including possible legally-binding measures, and to make recommendations to strengthen and institutionalise the Convention in all its aspects, to be submitted to States Parties for consideration and any further action. These measures should be formulated and designed in a manner that their implementation supports international cooperation, scientific research and economic and technological development, avoiding any negative impacts.

In this context, the Working Group will address the following:

- (a) Measures on international cooperation and assistance under Article X;
- (b) Measures on scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention;
- (c) Measures on confidence-building and transparency;
- (d) Measures on compliance and verification;
- (e) Measures on national implementation of the Convention;
- (f) Measures on assistance, response and preparedness under Article VII;
- (g) Measures on organizational, institutional and financial arrangements.

9. The Conference notes that the decision to establish the Working Group is without prejudice to the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group established by the Special Conference of 1994 (BWC/SPCONF/01) nor does it supersede, supplant or change it.

10. In fulfilling its mandate, the Working Group will take into account, inter alia, as appropriate, all documents agreed by the States Parties under the Convention, as well as the work already done by States Parties to strengthen the Convention, without prejudice to any decision or position.

11. The Rules of procedure of the Conference will be applied to the Working Group, *mutatis mutandis*. The Working Group will conduct its work by consensus.

12. Recognizing the need to balance an ambition to improve the intersessional programme within the constraints – both financial and human resources – faced by States Parties, the Conference allocates fifteen days to the Working Group for its substantive meetings, every year for the period from 2023 to 2026. The Conference urges the Working Group to complete its work as soon as possible, preferably before the end of 2025.

13. The Working Group will meet in Geneva, in in-person format in accordance with the regular practice under the Convention. The first meeting will be held from 15 to 16 March 2023 to discuss organisational issues. The substantive meetings of the Working Group will be held from 7 to 18 August and from 4 to 8 December 2023. For subsequent years, the Meetings of States Parties will set the dates of the substantive meetings of the Working Group, as appropriate, with the understanding that one of the meetings each year will be held consecutively with the Meeting of States Parties.

14. At its organisational meeting, the Working Group will elect a Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons for the period 2023-2024. The Chairperson will update the annual Meetings of States Parties on the work of the Working Group.

15. The Implementation Support Unit will render the necessary assistance and provide such services as may be required for the convening and activities of the Working Group.

16. At the completion of its work, the Working Group will adopt a report, by consensus, that includes conclusions and recommendations according to its mandate. The adopted report will be submitted to States Parties for their consideration at the Tenth Review Conference, or earlier at a Special Conference if it is requested according to the procedure established by the Third Review Conference (BWC/CONF.III/23), to decide on any further action.

C. Tenth Review Conference

17. The Conference reaffirms that Review Conferences constitute an effective method of reviewing the operation of the Convention with a view to assuring that the purposes of the Preamble and the provisions of the Convention are being realized. The Conference therefore reaffirms the previous decision that Review Conferences be held at least every five years and

decides that the Tenth Review Conference will be held in Geneva, in in-person format in accordance with the regular practice under the Convention, not later than 2027.

The Review Conference should review the operation of the Convention, taking into account, *inter alia*:

- (a) new scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention;
- (b) the progress made by States Parties on the implementation of the Convention; and
- (c) progress of the implementation of decisions and recommendations agreed upon at the Ninth Review Conference, taking into account, as appropriate, decisions and recommendations reached at previous Review Conferences.

D. International Cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening international cooperation and assistance under Article X

18. The Conference decides to develop with a view to establishing a mechanism open to all States Parties to facilitate and support the full implementation of international cooperation and assistance under Article X. In order for this mechanism to be established, the Working Group on the strengthening of the Convention will make appropriate recommendations.

E. Review of scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention

19. The Conference decides to develop with a view to establishing a mechanism to review and assess scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention and to provide States Parties with relevant advice. In order for this mechanism to be established, the Working Group on the strengthening of the Convention will make appropriate recommendations.

F. Promotion of universalization

20. The Conference notes with satisfaction the increase in the number of accessions to the Convention since the Eight Review Conference and stresses at the same time that there is a continuing need to achieve its universalization.

21. The Conference therefore requests States Parties to:

- (a) promote universalization of the Convention through bilateral contacts with States not party;
- (b) promote universalization of the Convention through regional and multilateral fora and activities;
- (c) report, as appropriate, on their activities at annual Meetings of States Parties;
- (d) provide, as appropriate, the Implementation Support Unit with relevant information on activities related to the promotion of universalization of the Convention.

22. The Conference decides that the Chairpersons of Meetings of States Parties will coordinate universalization activities, address States not party to the Convention, provide an annual report on universalization activities at Meetings of States Parties, and provide a progress report to the Tenth Review Conference.

Bearing in mind the primary responsibility of the States Parties on the implementation of this decision, the Conference tasks the Implementation Support Unit to:

- (a) provide administrative support to the Chairpersons of Meetings of States Parties in the implementation of this decision;
- (b) consolidate and make available information on progress made by States not party towards ratification or accession.

23. The Conference encourages States Parties to give more attention to States in which the ratification or accession process have started or are well advanced, and to those States waiting for further information or assistance or that have other priorities, as described in the annual reports on universalization.

G. Implementation Support Unit

24. The Conference notes with appreciation the work of the Implementation Support Unit and that it has successfully discharged its mandate. The Conference decides to renew the mandate of the Implementation Support Unit, *mutatis mutandis*, for the period from 2023 to 2027.

25. Without prejudice to the decision of the Sixth Review Conference (BWC/CONF.VI/6) on the establishment of the Implementation Support Unit and taking into account its decisions and the need for the Implementation Support Unit to render the necessary assistance and provide the services required for the intersessional period, the Conference decides to establish one new full-time staff position within the Implementation Support Unit, only for the period from 2023 to 2027. The Conference notes that all staff of the Implementation Support Unit will be engaged through the relevant recruitment procedures of the United Nations, considering the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, and giving due regard to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible, as well as to ensure full and equal presence of men and women.

26. The Conference notes that States Parties in a position to do so may consider making voluntary contributions to the Implementation Support Unit to enhance its ability to carry out its mandated tasks. Any such contributions will be made in full transparency, will be detailed in the annual report of the Unit, and will be used exclusively for the mandated tasks of the Unit.

27. The Implementation Support Unit will submit an annual written report to all States Parties on its activities to implement its mandate. The Unit's performance will be evaluated and its mandate reviewed by the States Parties at the Tenth Review Conference.

H. Sponsorship Programme

28. The Conference notes with appreciation the functioning of the sponsorship programme and welcomes the continued willingness of donors to provide voluntary contributions that have allowed to support and increase the participation of representative of developing States.

29. In order to enhance such support and participation, the Conference decides to renew the sponsorship programme, funded by voluntary contributions from donors in a position to provide them. The sponsorship programme will continue to be administered by the Implementation Support Unit in consultation with the Chairperson and Vice-chairpersons of the Meetings of States Parties. Priority for sponsorship will be given to those States Parties which have previously not participated in the meetings, or have been unable to regularly send experts from capital. Sponsorship may also be provided, depending on the availability of resources, to enhance participation of states not party in order to promote universalization of the Convention.

I. Financial Matters

30. The Conference stresses that the payment of annual assessed contributions by the States Parties in a timely manner and in full is of utmost importance and a prerequisite for the sustainability of the Convention. In this context, the Conference urges all States Parties to honour their financial commitments.

31. The Conference welcomes the improvement of the financial situation following the measures endorsed by the 2018 Meeting of States Parties, as reflected in Section V of the Report (BWC/MSP/2018/6), confirms their effectiveness and decides to review them at the Tenth Review Conference.

32. Recalling the decision of the 2018 Meeting of States Parties to establish, as an interim measure, a Working Capital Fund (WCF), and having reviewed its effectiveness and explored the possibility that it could be financed by assessed contributions in line with that decision, the Conference decided that the WCF should continue to be financed by voluntary contributions of States Parties and used solely as a source of short-term financing pending receipt of reasonably anticipated contributions, taking into account the average collection rate and pattern of payments

over the preceding three years. Drawdowns from the WCF should be repaid to the WCF from annual assessed contributions of States Parties within 12 months. In order to ensure the continuity of approved programmes and activities priority should be given to funding the contracts of the Implementation Support Unit. The effectiveness and functioning of the WCF is to be further reviewed at the Tenth Review Conference. Regular reporting on expenditure, collections, and the use of the WCF by the United Nations Office in Geneva and the Implementation Support Unit is to be continued.

33. The Conference stresses the need to continue monitoring the overall financial situation of the Convention and to keep it under active review, and requests the Chairperson of the annual Meetings of States Parties, in close consultation with the States Parties, the Implementation Support Unit, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Office at Geneva, to report on the overall financial situation of the Convention, implementation of the measures endorsed in 2018, and possible further measures for consideration by the Meetings of States Parties.

34. The Conference takes note of the financial implications of its decisions to strengthen the Convention, including the costs of the meetings to be held during the next intersessional period and the costs related to the Implementation Support Unit. The Conference decides that such costs will be shared by all States Parties, based on the United Nations scale of assessment pro-rated to take into account differences in membership between the Convention and the United Nations. In this respect, the Conference approves the estimated costs for the period 2023 to 2026, to be issued as BWC/CONF.IX/8.

35. The Conference notes that, under UN financial procedures, funds must be available before meetings can be held. The Conference requests States Parties to proceed with the payment of their share of the estimated costs as soon as the assessment notices have been received from the United Nations to help ensure that the meetings can be held as scheduled.

Annex I

Agenda for the Ninth Review Conference

1. Opening of the Conference
2. Election of the President
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Submission of the final report of the Preparatory Committee
5. Adoption of the rules of procedure
6. Election of the Vice-Presidents of the Conference and Chairpersons and ViceChairpersons of the Committee of the Whole, the Drafting Committee and the Credentials Committee
7. Credentials of representatives to the Conference:
 - (a) Appointment of the Credentials Committee
 - (b) Report of the Credentials Committee
8. Confirmation of the nomination of the Secretary-General
9. Programme of work
10. Review of the operation of the Convention as provided for in its Article XII:
 - (a) General debate
 - (b) Articles I-XV
 - (c) Preambular paragraphs and purposes of the Convention
11. Consideration of issues identified in the review of the operation of the Convention as provided for in its Article XII and any possible consensus follow-up action
12. Follow-up to the recommendations and decisions of the Eighth Review Conference and the question of future review of the Convention
13. Other matters
14. Report of the Committee of the Whole
15. Report of the Drafting Committee
16. Preparation and adoption of the final document(s)