

## **4. Documents from International Organizations (IOs)**

States Parties to the BWC are joined in their efforts to govern biological weapons by other international organizations, in accordance with their respective mandates. Documents emanating from these organizations are included in this section. The activities and initiatives of these organizations also serve to strengthen the international norm against the hostile use of disease against humans, animals and plants and thereby fall within the regime to control biological weapons.

Each of these organisations referred to below have made presentations to Meetings of the inter-sessional process and/or Review Conferences. These presentations are available via the ISU website at <http://www.unog.ch/bwc>

### **Food and Agriculture Organization**

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) based in Rome is a specialized agency of the United Nations established in 1945. The FAO's mandate is to raise levels of nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, better the lives of rural populations and contribute to the growth of the world economy. The FAO has acknowledged that it has a role in preventing and responding to emergencies that affect food security, including providing early warning, whether the emergencies are caused through natural or deliberate events. The organization has therefore established institutional mechanisms for coordinating emergency assistance. The FAO also hosts the secretariat of the 1952 International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) (as amended) which is designed to secure action to prevent the introduction and spread of pests of plants and plant products, and to promote appropriate measures for their control.

On 28 June 2011, during the 37th FAO Conference, the 192 Member countries of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) adopted a Resolution declaring global freedom from rinderpest, making it the first animal disease to be eliminated thanks to human efforts, and only the second disease of any kind, after smallpox in humans.

Officials from the FAO attended gave presentations at the 2007 Meeting of States Parties on "Current FAO Mechanisms for Dealing with the Deliberate Release of Detrimental Biological Agents" and at the 2008 Meeting of Experts on the "International Plant Protection Convention" Copies of the presentations are on the internet via the ISU website at <http://www.unog.ch/bwc>. This section of the Briefing Book includes a 2003 FAO document on "Biosecurity in Food and Agriculture".

### **International Committee of the Red Cross**

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an independent, neutral organization ensuring humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of war and armed violence. Established in 1863, the ICRC is headquartered in Geneva with delegations in around 80 countries and it has more than 12,000 staff. The ICRC's involvement in preventing the hostile application of poisons and disease is long standing; it issued an appeal against the use of poison gas in 1918, during the First World War. Regarding the use of these weapons as abhorrent, the ICRC has argued that "the use of such weapons would contravene existing international treaties and many of the fundamental norms of international humanitarian law".

In September 2002, the ICRC launched an *Appeal on Biotechnology, Weapons and Humanity* to promote consideration of the risks, rules and responsibilities related to advances in biotechnology which may lead to their hostile use.

Following on from this appeal, the ICRC released its principles of practice, *Preventing Hostile Use of the Life Sciences: From Ethics and Law to Best Practice*, in November 2004. Developed through a consultative process with experts in science and policy matters, the principles of practice are designed to form part of a multidisciplinary preventive framework which maximizes the benefits of research in life sciences and its application for humanity, while minimizing the risk of hostile use of advances in this domain. The 2002 appeal and the 2004 principles of practice are included in this section of the Briefing Book.

Representatives from the ICRC attended the 2010 Meeting of Experts and gave a presentation on “Responding to use or alleged use of biological weapons: A reality check”. This presentation is available on the BWC’s website; <http://www.unog.ch/bwc>

## **Interpol**

The International Criminal Police Organization, better known as Interpol, has become an active player in the regime to prevent the hostile use of disease. Interpol was established in 1923 and currently has 188 Member States. Using its perspective as an international law enforcement agency, and concentrating specifically on bioterrorist and other bio-criminal activities, the first ever Interpol Global Conference on Bioterrorism was held in March 2005 at Interpol headquarters in Lyon. The conference brought together senior police officers and counter-terrorism specialists, national and international governmental and non-governmental agencies, scientists and other academics and agreed a programme of work, including developing police training programmes; establishing a resource centre at the disposal of law enforcement worldwide; developing an Incident Response Guide for law enforcement; and enhancing cooperation and understanding between international organizations, including public health officials, customs and law enforcement officials.

As part of its aim to provide regional training for countries in need of capacity-building in the appropriate responses to a bioterrorist incident, Interpol has convened five regional workshops for law enforcements officials in South Africa in November 2005; Singapore in March 2006; Chile in July 2006, Ukraine in November 2006 and Oman in March 2007. Since then they have conducted nine train-the-trainer sessions and four table top exercises. In November 2010, the Dutch National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Interpol co-organised a global bio-terrorism exercise, *Bioshield Global 2010*, in Utrecht, The Netherlands.

Officials from Interpol have attended and presented at the 2007 Meeting of Experts, on the Bioterrorism Prevention Programme and at the 2010 Meeting of Experts on “After action report Bioterrorism TTEX « BIOSHIELD » Americas region Argentina, 14-16 June 2010”, and made statements at the 2007 Meeting of States Parties, the 2008 Meeting of States Parties.

The Final Communiqué of the 1st Interpol Global Conference on Bioterrorism is included in this section of the Briefing Book. Details of how to obtain a copy of the second edition of the Bioterrorism Incident Pre-Planning and Response Guide are available at <https://www.interpol.int/Public/BioTerrorism/guide.asp>

## **Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons**

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) consists of the 188 States Parties (as of 1 October 2011), to the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) which convene as the Conference of the States Parties; the Executive Council; and the

Technical Secretariat. The OPCW is headquartered in The Hague. The relationship between the CWC and the BWC is necessarily close for a number of reasons, not least the overlap between the two treaties regarding toxins and the increasingly blurred lines between chemistry and biology. In addition, Article IX of the BWC calls on its States Parties to “continue negotiations in good faith with a view to reaching early agreement on effective measures” to prohibit chemical weapons, so issues regarding the CWC are formally on the agenda of BWC review conferences.

The CWC stipulates that its States Parties should convene a Review Conference every five years (unlike the BWC, for which five-yearly review conferences only became established practice after the convening of the one review conference mandated by the treaty in 1980). The First CWC Review Conference took place in The Hague in April/May 2003. The Second CWC Review Conference convened in April 2008. As the CWC has an international organization to oversee and assist States Parties’ implementation of the treaty (unlike the BWC), the preparations for, and the conduct of, both CWC Review Conferences differed from the BWC Review Conferences. An open-ended working group met periodically throughout the 18 months prior to the First Review Conference and for 21 months prior to the Second Review Conference to prepare its agenda. As part of the preparations for the Second Review Conference the OPCW hosted a meeting between the States Parties to the CWC and representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

As at the First Review Conference, States Parties at the Second Review Conference reviewed the operation of the CWC thematically, rather than article-by-article as in the BWC. The First CWC Review Conference drew attention to the issues of national implementation and universality and recommended the adoption of action plans to facilitate progress on both issues, which were subsequently adopted by the Executive Council and Conference of the States Parties in October 2003. The action plans incorporate various deadlines and reporting requirements to ensure that political pressure is maintained to promote their objectives. Both action plans have been reviewed at sessions of the Conference of the States Parties in 2007 and 2009 and follow-up decisions have been adopted. The CWC action plans on national implementation and universality, as well as the relevant 2009 decisions, are included in this section of the Briefing Book for reference.

In December 2010, a 14 member Advisory Panel on Future Priorities for the OPCW was established. The Advisory Panel had four plenary sessions between December 2010 and June 2011. On 15 July the Panel presented its report to the Director General of the OPCW, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü. The Advisory Panel noted on the subject of convergence between chemistry and biology

The aims of these advances are plentiful: trying to find new types of medicines for humans and animals, new methods of pest control, enhanced food production, or new means of energy production – to mention just a few may also pose challenges to the way in which the Convention is being implemented. Furthermore, they call for answers with regard to the future relationship between the regimes that govern the ban, respectively, of chemical and biological weapons, and which have evolved separately in recent decades. (para 21-22)

Given the underlying trends in science and technology the Panel went on to recommend that the Technical Secretariat should establish a liaison (e.g., a point of contact) with the BWC implementation process. (para 119)

## **World Health Organization**

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the United Nations specialized agency for health established in April 1948 and based in Geneva. It is governed by its 193 Member States

through the World Health Assembly. The WHO has long been concerned with preventing the hostile exploitation of biology. For example, in 1967 the World Health Assembly resolved that “scientific achievements, and particularly in the field of biology and medicine—that most humane science—should be used only for mankind’s benefit, but never to do it any harm.” In 1969, the World Health Assembly, requested the WHO Director-General to continue to cooperate with the United Nations Secretary-General on the issue of chemical and biological weapons and the consequences of their possible use. The 1970 *WHO report on Health Aspects of Chemical and Biological Weapons: Report of a WHO Group of Consultants* was the result of that work and echoed the concerns of Member States about the misuse of biology. A revised and updated version of this 1970 report, *Public Health Response to Biological and Chemical Weapons—WHO Guidance* was published in 2004 (see [www.who.int/csr/delibepidemics/biochemguide/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/delibepidemics/biochemguide/en/index.html))

In May 2002, the World Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA 55.16 defining a role for WHO in responding to the “natural occurrence, accidental release or deliberate use of biological and chemical agents or radionuclear material that affect health.” The WHO Secretariat also established a unit focusing on “preparedness for deliberate epidemics” and a scientific working group on life science research and global health security. In 2008 the WHO produced *Research policy and management of risks in life sciences research for global health security* and in 2010 a guidance document, *Responsible life sciences research for global health security*, provided a biorisk management framework upon which Member States and institutions can consider drawing upon. An extract of that 2010 document is in this book

In 2004, the WHO issued the third edition of its Laboratory Biosafety Manual which for the first time included a section on laboratory biosecurity. An extract of the manual is included in this section of the Briefing Book with a full copy available at [www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/biosafety/WHO\\_CDS\\_CSR\\_LYO\\_2004\\_11/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/biosafety/WHO_CDS_CSR_LYO_2004_11/en/)) In September 2006, the WHO released *Biorisk Management: Laboratory Biosecurity Guidance*, which elaborates on the biosecurity section of the Laboratory Biosafety Manual by providing more detailed guidance on biosecurity within a biological laboratory and addresses the basic principles and best practices of biosecurity. An extract of that guidance is available in this section of the Briefing Book with a full copy at [www.who.int/entity/csr/resources/publications/biosafety/WHO\\_CDS\\_EPR\\_2006\\_6.pdf](http://www.who.int/entity/csr/resources/publications/biosafety/WHO_CDS_EPR_2006_6.pdf)

In 2005, WHO Member States unanimously adopted an update to the revised International Health Regulations (IHR). First adopted in 1969 (replacing the 1951 International Sanitary Regulations), the IHR provide an international legal framework for efforts to prevent and control the cross-border spread of communicable diseases. However, under the 1969 IHR, States are only required to notify the WHO if three diseases (cholera, plague and yellow fever) occur on their territory. In 1995, after outbreaks of emerging infectious diseases and the resurgence of existing diseases had rendered the IHR increasingly obsolete, WHO Member States requested a major updating of the regulations to adapt them to the highly mobile, globalized world of the 21st century. After negotiations in 2004 and 2005, the revised IHR text was adopted unanimously by the World Health Assembly at its session in 2005.

The updated regulations depart in important ways from the 1969 version, particularly in their expanded scope and the powers they grant to the WHO Secretariat. Rather than being limited to three diseases, the IHR 2005 require States to notify the WHO of any event that may constitute a “public health emergency of international concern” which is defined as “an extraordinary event which is determined ...: (i) to constitute a public health risk to other States through the international spread of disease and (ii) to potentially require a coordinated international response.” The decision of what constitutes a public health emergency of international concern is based on four criteria: (1) the seriousness of the public health impact; (2) the unusual or unexpected nature of the event; (3) the potential for international spread; and (4) the risk of restrictions on international travel or trade.

The IHR 2005 entered into force on 15 June 2007. The first major deadline in IHR (2005) implementation was the 15 June 2009 deadline for all WHO Member States to assess their core capacities. However as that deadline was approaching a pandemic (influenza A, H1N1) was declared. For the first time since their entry into force in 2007, the Regulations were used by the Director-General for the determination of a public health emergency of international concern, setting into motion the mechanisms laid out in the Regulations. In January 2010 the Director General of WHO suggested that the IHR Review Committee should review the functioning of the IHRs in light of the experience gained in the global response to the influenza A (H1N1) pandemic in 2009. The World Health Assembly adopted the report on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2011. A copy of that report is available via the WHO website: [http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA64/A64\\_10-en.pdf](http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA64/A64_10-en.pdf)

The WHO is also charged with overseeing the two authorised stockpiles of the smallpox virus at laboratories in Russia and the USA. In 2005, the WHO established a Global Smallpox Vaccine Reserve with the intention of acquiring 5 million doses to be stored in Geneva and a further 200 million doses to be pledged by States, to facilitate an effective response to a smallpox outbreak (although the disease was declared eradicated in 1980 there is some concern that non-authorised stocks remain and could fall into the wrong hands).

At the 60<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly in 2007 adopted resolution WHA60.1 on smallpox eradication: destruction of variola virus stocks requesting that the Director-General undertake a major review in 2010 of the results of the research undertaken, currently under way, and the plans and requirements for further essential research for global public health purposes so that the 64<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly in 2011 might reach global consensus on the timing of the destruction of existing variola virus stocks. The resolution

strongly reaffirmed the decision of previous Assemblies that the remaining stock of smallpox (variola) virus should be destroyed when crucial research based on the virus has been completed. The state of variola virus research will be reviewed at the 67<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly in 2014 and in light of that, determining a date for destruction of the remaining virus stocks will be discussed.

## **World Organization for Animal Health**

The World Organization for Animal Health, formerly known as the Office International des Epizooties (OIE), was established in 1924 and is based in Paris. It currently has 178 Member States. Preventing the spread of animal diseases through international movements is one of the key objectives of the OIE. One of the ways it seeks to achieve this is by publishing international standards and guidelines aimed at preventing the importation of pathogens that are dangerous for animals and humans and strengthening veterinary services so that they can improve their surveillance and response systems. The OIE works in close partnership with the FAO, and together they have developed a joint initiative – the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Trans-boundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs).

In May 2001 OIE national delegations unanimously adopted resolution 18/2011 which officially recognised all 198 countries of the world with rinderpest-susceptible animal populations free of the disease. This is the first time that an animal disease has been declared eradicated.

In a special edition of the OIE's *Scientific and Technical Review* on "The spread of pathogens through international trade" (vol 30, number 1), one of the articles addresses the issue of intentional introduction of animal disease as an act of bioterrorism. The authors N.P. Clarke & J.L. Rinderknecht note that biology provides both increased threat of new disease entities and methods for earlier and more effective detection and intervention. This article

can be accessed for free by going to <http://www.oie.int/en/publications-and-documentation/scientific-and-technical-review-free-access/list-of-issues/>

Included in this section of the Briefing Book is another article from the OIE's *Scientific and Technical Review* on "International organisations and their role in helping to protect the worldwide community against natural and intentional biological disasters".

Officials from the OIE gave presentations or statements to the Meeting of States Parties 2007 and Meeting of Experts in 2009 and 2010.