

Working Group on the Strengthening of 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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Agenda item 6

Identifying, examining and developing specific and effective measures, including possible legally-binding measures, and making recommendations to strengthen and institutionalize the Convention in all its aspects within the mandate of the Working Group

Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction: Assistance, Cooperation and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)

Submitted by Japan, co-sponsored by Canada and Germany

I. Background

1. The Global Partnership (GP) is a multinational non-proliferation initiative that was established at the G8 Summit in Kananaskis, Canada (2002) with a mandate to prevent terrorists and states of proliferation concern from acquiring weapons and materials of mass destruction. Cooperation projects funded by GP members during the Partnership's first decade focused on countries of the former Soviet Union, with priority concerns being: destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles in Russia, dismantling decommissioned nuclear submarines, disposition of fissile materials, and redirection of former weapons scientists. The mandate of the Global Partnership has since evolved and been renewed indefinitely. In 2011, the GP agreed on four priorities: (i) nuclear security; (ii) biological security; (iii) scientist engagement in the WMD field; and (iv) implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540, which obliges states to implement a range of domestic measures against WMD terrorism.

II. Membership and structure

2. Since its inception, the GP has expanded beyond the G7 and currently includes 31 active members: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (US) plus the European Union (EU). All members of the Global Partnership adhere to the Principles and Guidelines agreed at the Kananaskis Summit, and have committed to invest their resources – whether financial, expertise or influence – to support global WMD threat reduction efforts.

3. The GP chair rotates in accordance with the Presidency of the G7. Members of the Global Partnership coordinate and collaborate on an ongoing basis to develop and deliver



projects and programs to mitigate all manner of threats posed by chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) weapons and related materials. Under the leadership of the rotational G7 Presidency, GP partners convene twice annually as the Global Partnership Working Group (GPWG) to review progress, assess the threat landscape and discuss where and how GP partners can meaningfully engage to prevent terrorists and states of proliferation concern from acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction. The GPWG includes 4 sub-working groups, which facilitate regular dialogue between experts on the GP's thematic priorities: the Biological Security Sub-Working Group (BSWG), Chemical Security Sub-Working Group (CSWG), Nuclear and Radiological Security Sub-Working Group (NRSWG), Expansion and Outreach Sub-Working Group (EOSWG) and Centres of Excellence Sub-Working Group (COESWG).

4. In 2023, Japan held the first meeting of the GPWG in Tokyo in March. The meeting was attended by approximately 140 participants from 24 Member States and other countries, as well as the EU and other international organisations. Participants actively engaged in discussions on the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and other weapons, and exchanged views on concrete measures.

III. Approach to strengthen biological security

5. When establishing the Global Partnership at the 2002 Kananaskis Summit, Leaders recognized the risks associated with biological weapons and highlighted the importance of cooperative solutions to address biological threats. Consistent with the Kananaskis Principles and Guidelines, biological security has become a core priority for the Global Partnership, with members working to prevent the deliberate use of biological agents and to address unique biological security and safety challenges around the world.

6. The member countries of the GP are committed to implementing concrete projects around the world to combat WMD-related terrorism and proliferation. Global Partnership (GP) members have identified strengthening biological security as a key priority for their collective programming efforts, and pursue activities that aim to:

- Secure and account for materials that represent biological proliferation risks;
- Develop and maintain appropriate and effective measures to prevent, prepare for, detect and disrupt the deliberate misuse of biological agents;
- Strengthen national and international capabilities to rapidly identify, confirm/assess and respond to biological attacks;
- Reinforce and strengthen the BTWC and other biological disarmament and non-proliferation obligations, principles, practices and instruments; and
- Reduce biological proliferation risks through the advancement and promotion of safe and responsible conduct.

7. These GP “Deliverables”¹, which aim to build global capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to deliberate disease threats, are consistent with and mutually reinforcing of other international initiatives and conventions, including the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) and the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA).

8. In October 2022, the Global Partnership issued a *Declaration on Biological Security Biological*², in which members reaffirmed their commitment to the implementation of concrete projects around the world to combat biological-related terrorism and proliferation. In this Declaration, the GP reiterated the importance of the group's Biosecurity “Deliverables” and called on BTWC States Parties to “come together and act jointly to make the BTWC fit for the challenges of the 21st century”.

¹ <https://www.gpwm.com/bswg-deliverables>

² <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/global-partnership-declaration/2556786>

IV. Contributions in support of the BTWC

9. In developing and delivering biological threat reduction programming with partner countries, GP members place great importance on cooperation and assistance under Article X of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), which commits states “to facilitate, and have the right to participate in, the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the use of biological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes” and to “avoid hampering the economic or technological development of States Parties to the Convention or international cooperation in the field of peaceful bacteriological (biological) activities”. GP members assess that Article X-relevant international cooperation and collaboration delivered through the Global Partnership contributes significantly to mitigation of global biological threats, whether they be naturally occurring, the result of accidental releases (including from laboratories) or a deliberate bioweapons attack.

10. At the Ninth BTWC Review Conference, the GP submitted a working paper (BWC/CONF.IX/WP.51) that provided an overview of Article X-relevant projects implemented and/or funded by GP members since the Last Review Conference. That working paper included a total of 311 projects that were implemented or funded by 20 GP partners³, which were valued at more than US\$1.6 billion (or €1.54B) and were implemented in dozens of countries in every region of the world.

11. In addition to working directly with partner countries and regional and international organizations, GP partners have a long history of supporting the BTWC Implementation Support (ISU) to fulfill its mandate more effectively. This includes support for the BTWC sponsorship fund, which supports resource-challenged countries to engage more actively in the BTWC process, and the conduct of outreach and awareness-raising activities. In support of the Signature Initiative to Mitigate Biological Threats in Africa (SIMBA)⁴, which aims to reduce bio-threats through the aligned activities of GP and African countries working towards the same goals, GP members are currently supporting the ISU to advance the Universalization and Effective Implementation of the BTWC in Africa (2022 - 2026). As noted by the ISU⁵, this support was a direct response to “increasing demand for assistance throughout the region [that made] it necessary to establish a longer-term engagement with, and continued support to, countries on the continent”. In this context, this GP-funded project “comprehensively supports requests from African countries in their efforts to strengthen the Convention’s implementation and promote its universalization”.

12. As outlined above, GP members have sustained commitment and extensive experience in the delivery of assistance and development of cooperation programs that support the objectives of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. GP partners are ready to share that collective experience and expertise with the BTWC community, with a view to identifying practical, proven and effective ways and means to strengthen the full and effective implementation of the Convention.

³ Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States

⁴ <https://www.gpwm.com/africa-signature-initiative>

⁵ <https://disarmament.unoda.org/global-partnership-support/>