

WHAT BUGS YOU?

INFORM YOURSELF * CONCERN YOURSELF * BAN BW

BWPP NEWSLETTER

No. 1 – JULY 2007

A monthly newsletter from the BioWeapons Prevention Project

You are reading the first edition of the BWPP monthly newsletter *What Bugs You?*. The title plays on three meanings of the word ‘bug’: the information gathering device, the verb ‘to bother’ and the common language reference to microbes. They point to the three core goals of the newsletter: providing you with updates on developments relevant to the norm against the weaponization of disease, pointing you to activities and publications (by other BWPP Network Members, for instance) that may help you to get involved in the strengthening of the norm, and giving you information on progress towards the strengthening of the ban against biological weapons.

The BWPP is a global network of civil society organizations. Current membership stands at 54 Network partners (URL <www.bwpp.org/partners.html>); next month we hope to be able to introduce you to our 55th member from Nigeria. The ambition of *What Bugs You?* is to help foster a common sense of purpose. To achieve this goal it is important for you to provide us with information about your activities, publications, and other relevant initiatives. The BWPP Staff will contact you monthly in preparation of the next edition of the newsletter. At the back of *What Bugs you?* we have also included registration forms. If you know of civil society organizations that may be interested in joining the global BWPP Network or of individuals who might want to sign up as Associate Members, please forward them those forms.

The first issue of *What Bugs You?* features the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit. At the 6th Review Conference last December, the States Parties agreed on a full-time institutional agency to assist them with the effectuation of the convention. On 26 June the ISU formally commenced its activities. Also highlighted is the European Union Joint Action in support of the BTWC. In March 2006 the BWPP was contracted to assist with the technical implementation of the EU Joint Action, which focusses on the universalization of the BTWC and national implementation assistance. Each month we also plan to showcase one of the Network Member Organizations. We start with the *Institute for Security Studies* in Pretoria, South Africa. The ISS is presently represented on the BWPP Board of Directors.

The next issue of *What Bugs You?* will be distributed in the first week of August. Your comments and suggestions for new features are most welcome. And ... please do not forget to inform us of your planned activities and publications so that we can inform you of what is going on in the Network!

Jean Pascal Zanders
BWPP Director

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Eye on...

... the BWC Implementation Support Unit

At the 6th Review Conference the States Parties to the BTWC decided to set up an Implementation Support Unit (ISU). While still a long way from a full international organization to oversee the implementation of the disarmament treaty, the ISU is the first time the BTWC has an institutional setup with a certain degree of permanency. Staff has just been recruited and begun its activities.

Kathryn McLaughlin, the BWPP's Publication Coordinator, conducted an e-mail interview with Mr Richard Lennane, Head of the ISU, on the ISU's tasks, future plans and the upcoming meeting of the Experts of the States Parties.

Why was the ISU created now, after all the idea is an old one, first being discussed about 20 years ago?

It's true that the idea of creating some kind of institutional support for the BTWC is an old one, but the idea of an ISU as such is quite new. In the past, institutional support was envisaged as being some kind of permanent secretariat, and later, during the Ad Hoc Group negotiations on a protocol to strengthen the BTWC, as an international organization similar in scope and function to the

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The ISU is quite a different creature: it is much smaller than those earlier visions, and its role can be characterised as helping States Parties to help themselves'. That is, rather than undertake its own efforts to ensure compliance, or carry out inspections, or provide training and assistance, the ISU only assists and coordinates the individual and joint efforts of the States Parties to implement the BTWC.

This is perhaps a subtle distinction, but it was crucial to overcoming the differences among States Parties on what if any institutional support should be provided for the BTWC. We were fortunate in having a very successful model available in the ISU of the Anti-personnel Landmine Convention (the 'Ottawa Convention'), which has demonstrated that a small, inexpensive unit can work very effectively in helping States Parties carry out their obligations, and can remain small, inexpensive and effective over time.

When did the ISU become operational and how does it differ from its informal predecessors?

The ISU formally commenced operations as of 26 June, although it has been in informal operation since March. It is in many ways a natural extension

BW Bytes

- On 26 June the BWC Implementation Support Unit formally became operational.
- The *Sunshine Project* – a BWPP Network Member – revealed in a press release on 26 June that three Texas A&M University biodefense researchers were infected with the biological agent Q Fever in 2006. Despite confirmation in April of that year, Texas A&M officials did not report the incidents to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), as required by law. An investigation of the incidents is now underway. For more information, URL <<http://www.sunshine-project.org/publications/pr/pr260607.html>>.
- On 29 June the UN Security Council voted to terminate of the mandate of the *UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission* (UNMOVIC), which on the eve of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 conducted the last international onsite inspections relating to Iraq's chemical, biological and missile weapon programmes. In anticipation of the UNSC vote, UNMOVIC published on its website a 1,000 plus page Compendium of Iraq's unconventional weapon programmes, which provides a detailed account of Iraq's chemical and biological warfare programmes as well as UN efforts to map and verify the true extent and nature of Iraq's activities. The Compendium can be downloaded from URL <<http://www.un.org/Depts/unmovic/new/pages/compendium.asp>>

of its informal predecessors, and indeed the ISU mandate incorporates all the activities of the BTWC meeting secretariats that operated from 2003-2005. It differs mainly in having a clearer role and mandate, extended responsibilities for universalization activities and liaison with other organisations, and formal responsibility for the confidence-building measures (CBMs) and for coordinating offers and requests for assistance.

How will the ISU change the way in which the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations address biological weapons?

The ISU brings all the activities of the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) related to the BTWC into a single, well-defined unit, which from UNODA's point of view is a more convenient and efficient arrangement. But it is important to remember that although the ISU is based in UNODA, it works for (and is entirely funded by) the States Parties to the BTWC. The ISU therefore does not involve itself in UN activities outside the BTWC that address biological weapons, such as the revision of the UN Secretary-General's investigation mechanism. Such activities will continue to be carried out by the Weapons of Mass Destruction Branch of UNODA. Of course, the ISU stays closely in touch with all such activity, so that we can inform BTWC States Parties of relevant developments and opportunities.

How does the ISU intend to coordinate official requests and offers for technical assistance?

On a case-by-case basis. Where offers of and requests for assistance happen to be easily matched, we will simply put the representatives of the States Parties concerned in touch with each other. In other cases, we may discuss a requesting State Party's specific needs with other States Parties who have made general offers of assistance. We may also make use of the private area of our website (accessible to States Parties only) to 'advertise' offers and requests. We also expect that the meetings of experts each year will provide useful opportunities for 'assistance brokering'.

What do you think the realistic outcome of current universalization efforts is going to be?

I am quite optimistic that if the States Parties follow through on the commitments they made at the 6th Review Conference, we will see the membership of the BTWC match that of the CWC within two or three years. With the exception of three or four states in the Middle East, I don't believe there is any

country that actually objects to joining the BTWC. We have the advantage that the norm against BW is so strong: nobody would claim that they want to retain a BW capacity as a legitimate part of their national defence. So it is mainly a matter of overcoming bureaucratic and legislative inertia, and encouraging governments to make joining the BTWC more of a priority. With concerted efforts from States Parties, especially those with close relationships with non-members, there is no reason that membership of the BTWC could not reach 185 or more before the Seventh Review Conference. The ISU can and will play an important role in helping States Parties coordinate and concentrate their efforts.

What visions exist in terms of organizing regional and sub-regional efforts to stem biological weapons and what role can the ISU play in this?

This is one of the topics to be discussed at the 2007 meeting of experts (20-24 August), and I am eager to see what ideas are put forward at that meeting. We have already seen some interesting regional initiatives, such as the EU's Joint Action, and workshops in Asia organized jointly by Indonesia and Australia. I am interested in seeing what scope there is for regional bodies such as ASEAN and the Organization of American States to play a role in areas such as legislation and enforcement, awareness-raising and education, and codes of conduct. The ISU might assist with regional workshops, providing advice and briefing material, and helping States Parties and regional organizations benefit from and build on previous efforts elsewhere.

Should a BW event occur, what role could the ISU play?

The role of the ISU would be strictly limited to facilitating communications among States Parties, and providing administrative support for any action or process they might decide to initiate under the auspices of the BTWC.

What plans does the ISU have for outreach and better engaging non-governmental organisations

Forthcoming events

- 20-24 August 2007 - Meeting of the Experts of the States Parties to the BTWC, Geneva (Please check out <www.bwpp.org> for the latest information on NGO registration)
- 21 August 2007 - BWPP lunchtime event: Launch of the BioWeapons Monitor, Phase 2, Geneva

and civil society?

Our plans are defined by the needs of the States Parties, and these are closely linked to the 2007-2010 intersessional work programme. In consultation with the Chair of each year's meetings, we will be identifying and approaching those institutions and organisations which have particular interests and expertise in the topics under consideration. Should the States Parties decide on some specific outreach

activity (for example, as a result of their consideration of the "oversight, education and awareness-raising" topic scheduled for 2008), we will of course undertake that. And we will continue to make arrangements for NGOs and academic institutions to have opportunities to present their views to States Parties at the meetings of the intersessional process.

A BWPP Network Member in focus**The Institute for Security Studies**

The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) is a regional strategic studies think-tank based in Pretoria, South Africa. It engages on peace and security issues in Africa and has recently embarked on a three-year project to identify and strengthen Africa's role in international efforts to strengthen disarmament and non-proliferation in the context of Africa's developmental imperatives. The ISS recognizes that the threat of biological weapons to human security is of great concern.



Among its activities, the ISS is conducting a research study in three Southern African states to assess the nature of their systems of disease surveillance and monitoring and the capacity of the national health systems to respond to disease outbreaks. The assessment will result in recommendations on how these systems can be improved through increased international co-operation and assistance.

The ISS will also host 2 regional seminars with professional associations and working scientists to raise awareness and debate about the risks, rules and their responsibilities in relation to dual-use issues in the chemical, nuclear and biological fields.

The findings of the workshops will be reported on at the BTWC Meeting of Experts during a seminar co-hosted by the BWPP.

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A field report

EU Joint Action in support of the BTWC

On 27 February 2006 the European Union (EU) adopted a Joint Action in support of the Biological and Toxin weapons Convention (BTWC). The programme runs for eighteen months until September 2007 and may be extended for another half year. It forms part of the overall EU strategy against the proliferation of unconventional weapons, which includes similar Joint Actions in support of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the Chemical Weapons Convention. To this end it finances action programmes in close collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

BWPP involvement

However, at the time the BTWC lacked an international organisation. As a consequence, the EU contracted the BWPP in March 2006 to assist it with the technical implementation of the Joint Action. The BWPP is thus actively involved in the process of universalizing the convention and assisting states parties to the BTWC with the development of national legislation to implement the treaty. As far as is known, this is the first time the EU has contracted a non-governmental organisation for this type of activity. The exceptional nature of the collaboration is further underscored by the fact that the BWPP is based in Switzerland, which is not an EU member state.

Universalisation of the BTWC

Promotion of the universality of the BTWC is the first key objective. Presently the BTWC has 155 states parties. Sixteen further states have signed the treaty, but must still ratify it. Finally, 24 states have neither signed nor acceded to the BTWC. The Joint Action envisages five regional seminars. The meeting for Southern and East Africa was held in Nairobi in June 2006 and was followed by the Asia-Pacific regional meeting in Bangkok in November. In January and April of this year meetings in San José (Costa Rica) for Latin America and the Caribbean and Dakar (Senegal) for West and Central Africa respectively were organized. The remaining seminar for the Middle East has tentatively been scheduled for December.

During a regional meeting representatives of the government of the non-states parties responsible for arms control, disarmament or non-proliferation are engaged in intensive two-day briefings and discussions on the relevance of the BTWC to the security of their countries and the region in which they are located. Furthermore, the question of the universalization of the BTWC is also placed in the broader context of public health, food security and international cooperation in the prevention of terrorism and crime. In addition to speakers from the EU and the BWPP, experts from the region as well as from international organisations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) address the



EU Joint Action in Support of the
Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention

participants.

Discussions in small working groups ensure that the communication goes both ways, as it is important to know where the problems regarding ratification or accession are situated and how they can be overcome. For example, it was interesting to learn that many of the target states in Southern and East Africa were unaware of the BTWC simply because they had not yet acquired their independence when the convention entered into force in 1975. As the BTWC lacked an international organization to promote the goals of the convention, the governments were never briefed on its existence. Consequently, raising issue awareness—particularly among government departments, as well as national parliaments, industry and the scientific community—to build support for the ratification or accession to the BTWC will in many cases be a necessary first step.

National implementation assistance

The second goal of the Joint Action is to assist

BTWC states parties with the development of national legislation required to make the treaty obligations applicable to any natural or legal person on the territory or under the jurisdiction of a state party, or with the improvement of existing laws and regulations.

One Latin American state has now requested such assistance. With the help of national experts from EU Members a review of that country's legislation has been undertaken and an assistance visit that will focus on legislative drafting for the late summer is currently being prepared by the BWPP Legal Coordinator.

More information

A website in support of the EU Joint Action provides further background information and contains the reports of the regional seminars promoting universalization of the BTWC:

<www.euja-btwc.eu>

Recent publications

- British Medical Association, *The use of drugs as weapons: the concerns and responsibilities of healthcare professionals* BMA May 2007, <www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/drugsasweapons>
- Davison, N., 'The contemporary development of 'non-lethal' weapons', Bradford Non-Lethal Weapons Research Project Occasional Paper no 3 (May 2007), <www.bradford.ac.uk/acad/nlw/research_reports/docs/BNLWRP_OP3_May07.pdf>
- Sims, N., 'The Future of Biological Disarmament: New Hope after the Sixth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention', *Nonproliferation Review*, vol. 14, no. 2, (July 2007)
- Zanders, J. P. & Nixdorff, K., *Enforcing Non-Proliferation: The European Union and the 2006 BTWC Review Conference*, edited by Lindström, G., Chaillot Paper no. 93 (November 2006), 133p., <<http://www.bwpp.org/documents/200611Chaillot93BTWCRevCon.pdf>>
- Zanders, J. P., 'The Chemical Weapons Convention at Ten: What if there had been no OPCW?' Presentation by J. P. Zanders at 'Chemical Weapons: Does Prohibition Work?', conference organized by Egmont, Royal Institute for International Relations, Brussels, 15 May 2007, <<http://www.bwpp.org/documents/20070515CWC10thanniversaryBXL.pdf>>
- World Health Organization, Life Science Research & Development (R&D) and Global Health Security, Report of the First Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland 16-18 October 2006, <www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/deliberate/WHO_CDS_EPR_2007_4n.pdf>

BWPP Board Elections

At the end of 2007 the BWPP will organize its second elections of representatives to the Board of Directors. The basic election procedure envisages that every two years the position of three organizations (out of a total of nine) comes up for election.

The three BWPP Network Member organizations whose mandate comes up for (re)election are:

- Department of Peace Studies University of Bradford, United Kingdom;
- Harvard Sussex Program, Science and Technology Policy Research, University

of Sussex, United Kingdom; and

- International Network of Engineers and Scientists for Global Responsibility (INES), Germany.

Who can be nominated?

All organizations that are a member of the BWPP Network at the start of the nomination period (15 October 2007) can be nominated for election.

While a BWPP Network member organization can nominate itself, receiving the

endorsement from or nomination by one or more other BWPP Network member organizations promotes interaction among the Network Members and offers opportunities to make the respective work programmes more widely known.

More information

More information about the election procedure is available from the BWPP website at:

<<http://www.bwpp.org/partners/boardelections.html>>



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**INFORM YOURSELF
CONCERN YOURSELF
GET INVOLVED!**

The BWPP welcomes new members who wish to actively participate in the efforts to strengthen the norms against the use of disease as a weapon or morally support the BWPP goals.

BWPP membership consists of civil society organizations alarmed by the threat posed by biological weapons (BW). Member organizations come from the arms control and disarmament community, as well as from related fields, such as the biological sciences and biotechnology, health and safety, environment and ethics in addition to members of the general public.

Individuals who do not belong to a civil society organization can sign up as an **Associate Member** and enjoy most of the benefits of the member organizations, participate in or be actively involved in BWPP activities.

As a civil society network-based organization, the BWPP draws its legitimacy as an important interlocutor on all matters relevant to the weaponization of disease from its Network (for organizations) and Associate (for individuals) members.

Join the BWPP Network

Network Membership

The BWPP defines ‘civil society’ as associations of citizens (outside their families, friends and businesses) entered into voluntarily to advance their interests, ideas and ideologies. The term does not include profit-making activity (the private sector) or governing (the public sector). Included are mass organizations, trade unions, professional associations, social movements, indigenous people’s organizations, religious and spiritual organizations, academe and public benefit non-governmental organizations.

Member organizations are eligible for election to the Board of Directors as well receiving monthly updates of BWPP activities and those of its network members. All BWPP publications will be sent to Network members and the BWPP can act as a conduit for communication and collaboration between its members. Network Members also have the opportunity to be involved in and assist in guiding BWPP networking and outreach activities.

Associate Membership

BWPP Associate Membership enables individuals to support the general goals of the BWPP and to contribute to its work.

Associate Members receive BWPP publications and information; can, upon request, be added to the Network Members information list; can be involved in BWPP outreach activities as an Associate Member; and suggest via the BWPP Director activities and working strategies to the Board of Directors, who will decide on whether to include them into the BWPP work plan.

To become a Network or Associate Member, please complete and return the appropriate registration form.

**For more information, please visit the BWPP website at
<www.bwpp.org/joining>**

Application for BWPP Network Membership

Name of organization:

Country in which organization is based:

Contact person:

Address:

Telephone:

Fax:

Email:

Website:

What is the main focus of your work?

Why do you want to join the BWPP?

What are your main sources of funding? (Tick more than one if necessary)

Foundations Governments Donations Other

Date your organization was established:

Please sign the mission statement (required)

(Name of organization)

supports the BWPP mission statement

The BioWeapons Prevention Project is dedicated to strengthening the norm against the weaponisation of disease. It is a global civil society activity that tracks governmental and other behaviour under the treaties that codify the norm. It nurtures and is empowered by an international network, and acts both through the network and through its publications

Signed (Authoritative representative):

Date:

Please return the form to the BWPP by fax (+41-22-738 3582) or mail it to Avenue de Sécheron 12, CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland

Application for Associate Membership

Name:

Title:

Nationality:

Address:

Telephone:

Fax:

Email:

Website:

Why do you want to become an Associate Member?

What field do you work in?

What is your main area of activity? (Tick more than one if necessary)

NGO Academia Social movement Government Science Industry Other

Please sign the mission statement (required)

I support the BWPP mission statement:

The BioWeapons Prevention Project is dedicated to strengthening the norm against the weaponisation of disease. It is a global civil society activity that tracks governmental and other behaviour under the treaties that codify the norm. It nurtures and is empowered by an international network, and acts both through the network and through its publications

Signed:

Date:

The BWPP may enter your name in a list of endorsements: Yes No

Please return the form to the BWPP by fax (+41-22-738 3582) or mail it to Avenue de Sécheron 12, CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland