

THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

AN INTRODUCTION

THIRD EDITION

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Office for Disarmament Affairs
Geneva, 2024

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Status of universalization of the BWC

(September 2024)



187

STATES
PARTIES

4

SIGNATORY
STATES

6

NON-SIGNATORY
STATES

Base map source: United Nations Geospatial

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the Parties.

Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined.

The BWC: quick facts

The Convention is formally known as “The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction”.¹

The Convention comprises 15 articles. The full text of the BWC can be found in Annex I.

The Convention was negotiated by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva, Switzerland. It was opened for signature on 10 April 1972 and entered into force on 26 March 1975.

The Convention has 187 States Parties and four signatory States (as of September 2024). Six States have neither signed nor ratified the Convention.

The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America serve as the three Depositary Governments of the BWC.

The BWC has an annual budget of just over USD 2.1 million and is serviced by the Implementation Support Unit based within the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in Geneva.

¹ *The Convention is abbreviated as either the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) or as the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC).*

What is the BWC all about?

The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is a cornerstone of the multilateral disarmament regime intended to rid the world of biological and toxin weapons. The Convention effectively prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons.

The BWC has established a strong norm against biological weapons. The Convention has reached almost universal adherence, with 187 States Parties and four signatory States (as of September 2024).

Considered a descendant of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which banned the use of chemical and biological weapons, the BWC was the first multilateral treaty to outlaw an entire category of weapons of mass destruction.

States Parties have gradually elaborated upon the Convention's provisions by reaching additional agreements and understandings at its Review Conferences, which have usually been held every five years. The BWC Review Conference is mandated by Article XII of the Convention, and plays a critical role in reviewing the Convention and charting next steps. A total of nine Review Conferences have taken place since the first one in 1980. The Tenth Review Conference will take place in 2027.



▲ Ninth Review Conference at the Palais des Nations, Geneva. (Photo credit: UNODA)

Key provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention include:

ARTICLE I

Never under any circumstances to develop, produce, stockpile, acquire or retain biological weapons.

ARTICLE II

To destroy or divert to peaceful purposes biological agents, toxins, weapons, equipment and means of delivery prior to joining.

ARTICLE III

Not to transfer, or in any way assist, encourage or induce anyone else to acquire or retain biological weapons.

ARTICLE IV

To take any national measures necessary to implement the provisions of the BWC domestically.

ARTICLE V

To consult bilaterally and multilaterally and cooperate in solving any problems with the implementation of the BWC.

ARTICLE VI

To request the UN Security Council to investigate alleged breaches of the BWC and to comply with its subsequent decisions.

ARTICLE VII

To assist States which have been exposed to a danger as a result of a violation of the BWC.

ARTICLE X

To facilitate the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and information for peaceful purposes.

How was the BWC negotiated?

The Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (commonly known as the Geneva Protocol), was signed in Geneva in June 1925 and entered into force in February 1928. By prohibiting the use of biological weapons, the Geneva Protocol became the first important milestone towards a comprehensive ban on such arms. However, several States ratified the Protocol with reservations both about its applicability and with respect to the potential use of chemical or biological weapons in retaliation. These reservations effectively rendered the Geneva Protocol a no-first-use agreement only.

Disarmament talks after the Second World War originally addressed biological and chemical weapons together. However, these discussions remained inconclusive for many years. Soon after States completed negotiations for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1968, an initiative of the United Kingdom helped pave the way to overcome the impasse in the discussions on chemical and biological weapons. In a working paper submitted to the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament in Geneva, the United Kingdom proposed considering biological weapons and chemical weapons separately, with attention concentrated first on the former.

Based on that proposal, formal negotiations began in Geneva one year later for what would become the Biological Weapons Convention. Former President of the United States, Richard Nixon's decision in November 1969 to unilaterally abandon the offensive biological weapons programme of the United States sent a strong supportive signal to the negotiators in Geneva.

Nevertheless, a considerable number of States initially opposed the idea of a separate convention on biological weapons. An important development for the negotiations came in March 1971, when the Soviet Union made a proposal on behalf of the seven Socialist Group countries for a draft convention covering only biological weapons.

As the discussions progressed, both the United States and the Soviet Union introduced identical-but-separate draft conventions to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) in early August 1971. After further discussions, CCD members agreed on 28 September 1971 to forward the draft convention to the United Nations General Assembly. The Assembly approved the text on 16 December 1971.

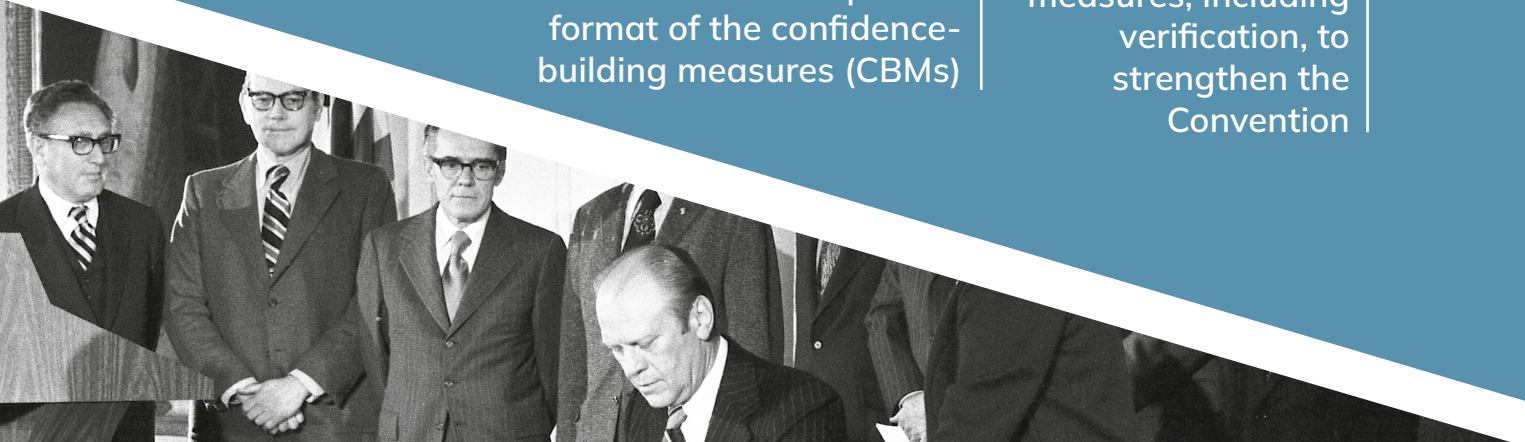
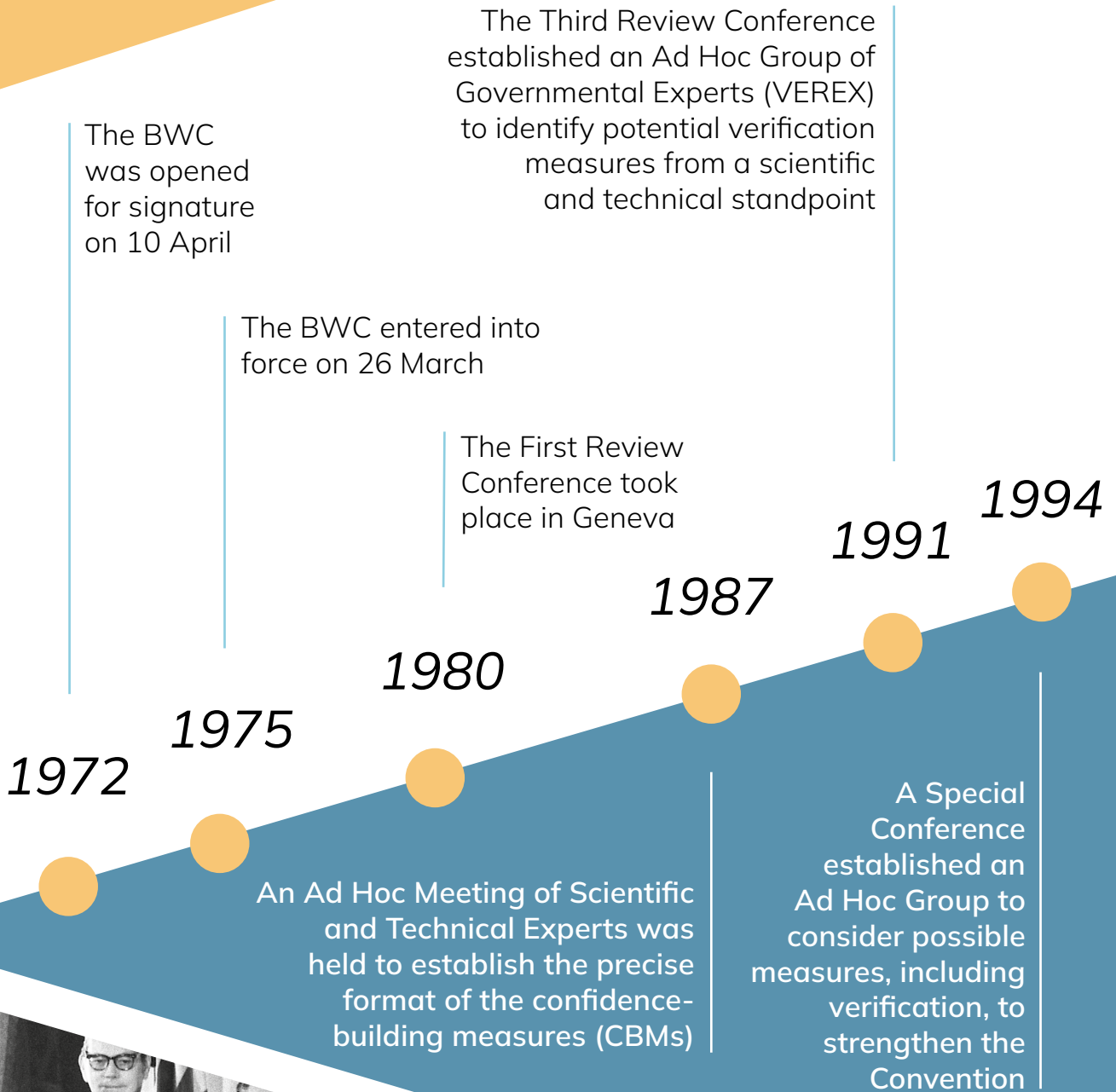
On 10 April 1972, the BWC was opened for signature at ceremonies in London, Moscow and Washington, D.C. After the required deposit of instruments of ratification by 22 Governments (including those of the three Depositaries), the Convention entered into force on 26 March 1975.

The BWC celebrates its fiftieth anniversary in 2025.



▲
The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament holds negotiations in the Council Chamber at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, in 1969. (Photo credit: UNOG)

Milestones of the BWC regime



Fiftieth Anniversary of the BWC

The First Meeting of the Working Group took place

The Seventh Review Conference established the BWC Sponsorship Programme and a Cooperation and Assistance Database

2025

2023

2022

2011

2006

2001-2002

The Ninth Review Conference established a Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention

The Sixth Review Conference agreed on establishment of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU)

The Fifth Review Conference opened in 2001, it was later suspended until 2002 due to divergent positions on the verification protocol

▶ US President Gerald Ford signs the US instrument of ratification of the BWC on 22 January 1975. (Photo credit: Ford Presidential Library)

Why is the BWC important?

Biological weapons can be deadly and highly contagious. They can be used to attack humans, livestock and crops. Diseases caused by such weapons would not confine themselves to national borders and could spread rapidly around the world. Recent disease outbreaks are widely recognized as demonstrating the lack of preparedness in the global health and humanitarian systems to respond to such situations.

Such outbreaks also send an alarming message about the potentially dramatic consequences that could be caused by the deliberate release of biological agents or toxins by State or non-State actors. In addition to the tragic loss of lives, the economic consequences of such an event could be devastating. All States are therefore potentially at risk, and all benefit from joining the BWC.



The Convention stands as a monumental testament to the fact that unity and cooperation can transcend the complexities of the geopolitical arena. It embodies our shared commitment, as articulated in the Convention's preamble, to eradicate the spectre of biological agents and toxins being used as instruments of warfare, for the betterment of humanity at large.

H.E. Flavio Soares Damico's letter to States Parties on the occasion of the 49th anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention



▲ Medical staff carry the body of a victim of Ebola during a response operation in Western Africa. (Photo credit: World Health Organization)

The twenty-first century has been called the “age of biotechnology”. Advances in biotechnology and the life sciences are occurring at an unprecedented and accelerating pace, enhanced by the effects of globalization and ever-improving information and communication technology capabilities. While such developments bring unparalleled benefits and are generally to be welcomed, they could also be misused due to the inherent dual-use nature of the life sciences. Therefore, it is imperative that States Parties monitor new trends in science and the convergence with emerging technologies such as AI on an ongoing basis.

There are growing concerns that non-State actors, including terrorist groups, may obtain and use biological weapons. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, noted that “The weakness and lack of preparedness exposed by this pandemic provide a window onto how a bioterrorist attack might unfold - and may increase its risks. Non-state groups could gain access to virulent strains that could pose similar devastation to societies around the globe.”



The number of people around the world who can manipulate dangerous pathogens is increasing, among them those with potential malign intent, including terrorists.

Our Common Agenda - Policy Brief 9.
A New Agenda for Peace
July 2023

At the same time, a number of experts maintain that there are still considerable scientific, technological and practical hurdles to effectively weaponizing and disseminating biological agents, particularly for non-State actors.

In view of the real threat posed by biological weapons, a comprehensive and multifaceted approach is required. Close cooperation between the security, scientific, public health and agricultural sectors, industry, academia and civil society is required and needs to take place at the national, regional and international levels. Involving all voices is crucial to the dialogue, and promoting participation by women and young people is therefore a growing priority.

The BWC is the sole multilateral forum in which participants can holistically discuss and address all aspects of the biological weapons issue. As such, BWC meetings bring together experts from States Parties across the globe, providing a platform for cooperation and information exchange to meet international security obligations.

In addition to addressing disarmament and security issues, the BWC supports the promotion of the peaceful uses of biological science and technology, thereby helping to prevent the global spread of diseases. Article X of the BWC requires States Parties 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.

By encouraging and facilitating the peaceful uses of biological science and technology, the Convention contributes to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly the following Sustainable Development Goals:

- ▶ SDG 3 – Good health and well-being;
- ▶ SDG 4 – Quality education;
- ▶ SDG 9 – Industry, innovation & infrastructure;
- ▶ SDG 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions; and
- ▶ SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals.

Assistance and cooperation activities under the Convention take place at both bilateral and multilateral levels, helping to build capacity in developing countries. States Parties have also made individual and collective financial contributions. Notably, this assistance on national implementation, development of technical capacities, and scientific and technological cooperation has helped enhance BWC-related outreach to women and youth, the scientific community and academia.

The BWC also helps to build capacity to respond to disease outbreaks. It provides a multilateral framework in which States Parties can meet regularly to advise



▲ First responders participate in sampling and decontamination drills. (Photo credit: Spiez Laboratory)

and assist each other in developing their national capacities in areas such as disease surveillance, detection and diagnosis, biosafety and biosecurity, education, training and awareness-raising, emergency response, and legal, regulatory and administrative measures.

At the Eighth BWC Review Conference in 2016, States Parties agreed that “the United Nations and other international organizations could also play an important role in coordinating, mobilizing and delivering the required support and assistance, when required and upon request of the concerned State Party.” In particular, States Parties referred to the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) as organizations that could participate in delivering assistance.



▲ Sub-Regional Workshop on Enhancing the Implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention in South Asia, Kathmandu/Nepal (August 2023)
(Photo credit: UNRCPD)

▽ Fourth Meeting of the Working Group at the Palais des Nations, Geneva. (Photo credit: UNODA)



Various efforts are undertaken by States Parties, international organizations and civil society to strengthen Article VII of the Convention. Additionally, States Parties address assistance, response and preparedness issues within the framework of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention, whose aim is to make recommendations to strengthen and institutionalize the Convention.

How can a country join the BWC?

A State can become a State Party to the BWC by three means: ratification, accession or succession. As of September 2024, a total of 187 States had joined the Convention by taking one of those steps.

Ratification is the step to be taken by “Signatory States”, those that had signed the BWC before it entered into force in 1975. As of September 2024, four Signatory States had not yet ratified the Convention.²

Accession is applicable to States that did not sign the Convention before its entry into force. Succession, meanwhile, is relevant for newly independent States that consent to be bound by a treaty to which the predecessor State was a party.

As of September 2024, six States had neither signed nor ratified the BWC.³

The costs of becoming a State Party to the Convention are minimal. Almost two-thirds of BWC States Parties pay less than USD 1,000 per year, with many lower-income countries paying less than USD 100 annually.

Each State undertakes the process of ratifying, acceding or succeeding to the BWC in accordance with its own national constitutional processes, for which formal approval by the national parliament to be bound by the Convention is often required.

² *Egypt, Haiti, Somalia and Syria.*

³ *Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Israel and Kiribati.*



Disarmament can play an important role in ending existing conflicts and preventing the outbreak of new strife. Disarmament and arms control processes provide the breathing space for confidence to be built, stability to be strengthened and trust to be established.

António Guterres
UN Secretary-General

Once the domestic constitutional requirements have been satisfied, an instrument of accession, ratification or succession should be deposited with one or more of the three Depositary Governments of the Convention: the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. A State is bound by the Convention from the date that its instrument of ratification, accession or succession is deposited.

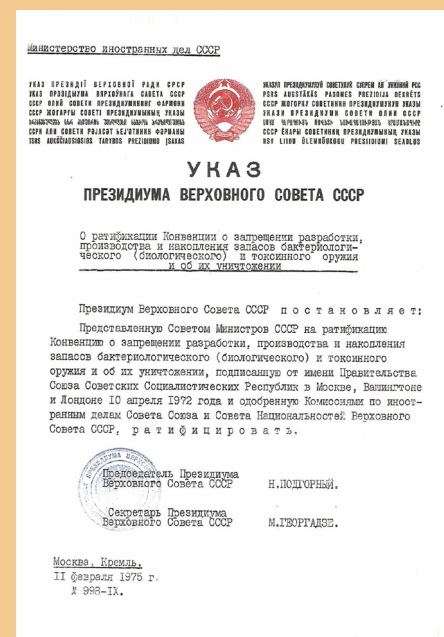
Universal adherence to the BWC will strengthen the global norm against the use of disease as a weapon, reinforcing the international community's determination that such use would be, in the words of the Convention's preamble, "repugnant to the conscience of mankind".

Since the Sixth Review Conference in 2006, membership of the BWC has increased from 155 to 187 States Parties (as of September 2024), an increase of more than 20 per cent. All five permanent members of the Security Council are party to the Convention, as are all States in Europe, all States but one in Latin America and the Caribbean, all States but one in the Asia-Pacific region, and the vast majority of States in Africa and the Middle East.

As part of their mandate, the Chairs of BWC meetings actively promote the universalization of the Convention and encourage States not yet party to join. A number of States Parties and non-governmental organizations also offer support to States looking to ratify or accede to the BWC.

Further information can be found on the BWC website.

States Parties in every region have offered to assist those in need with drafting or amending implementing legislation, establishing regulations, building administrative capacity, and other aspects of national implementation. Administrative support and advice on all aspects of implementation is available. For further information, please visit the BWC website: <https://disarmament.unoda.org/biological-weapons>



Instrument of ratification of the Soviet Union, 11 February 1975. (Photo credit: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation)

How is the BWC implemented?

In order to fully implement the BWC, States Parties are obliged to translate the commitments found in the Convention into effective national action. Article IV of the Convention requires each State Party to “take any necessary measures to prohibit and prevent the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition, or retention of the agents, toxins, weapons, equipment and means of delivery specified in Article I of the Convention, within the territory of such State, under its jurisdiction or under its control anywhere”. These necessary measures depend on the circumstances and legal systems of each State Party; as such, States Parties can take different approaches to implementing the provisions of the Convention.

National implementation of the obligations under the BWC usually requires coordination and close cooperation among a number of government departments or entities. In order to identify relevant national structures, States should review each article of the BWC in order to link the roles and responsibilities of national authorities with specific obligations. In practice, some States Parties have developed and established inter-departmental processes, structures and procedures to coordinate and review the implementation of all obligations under the Convention.

The Sixth Review Conference in 2006 decided that each State Party should designate a national contact point for:

- Coordinating the national implementation of the Convention and communicating with other States Parties and relevant international organizations;
- Preparing the annual submission of confidence-building measures;
- Facilitating information exchange on universalization efforts.

A Guide to Implementing the Biological Weapons Convention has been developed by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, with voluntary funding and the contributions of a wide range of BWC experts, to assist States Parties in their efforts to implement the Convention at the national level.



154 States Parties have provided the BWC Implementation Support Unit with details of their national contact points (as of September 2024). Contact details are available to States Parties through a restricted access page. Unlike the Chemical Weapons Convention, the BWC does not include an obligation for States Parties to establish or designate a National Authority. While BWC States Parties are therefore free to develop their own institutional arrangements that take into account national constitutional responsibilities and organizational structures, some States Parties have designated a lead organization or established a central body.

In addition to measures undertaken by national governments, important contributions and complementary measures can be pursued by universities, NGOs and industry at the national level. A number of universities have undertaken significant efforts to develop education programmes for life scientists on dual-use research and on biosecurity. Other initiatives may include the development of a culture of responsibility among relevant professionals; and the voluntary development, adoption and promulgation of codes of conduct.

In order to promote the implementation of Article X, the Seventh BWC Review Conference in 2011 decided to establish a database to facilitate the exchange of requests for, and offers to provide, assistance and cooperation among States Parties.

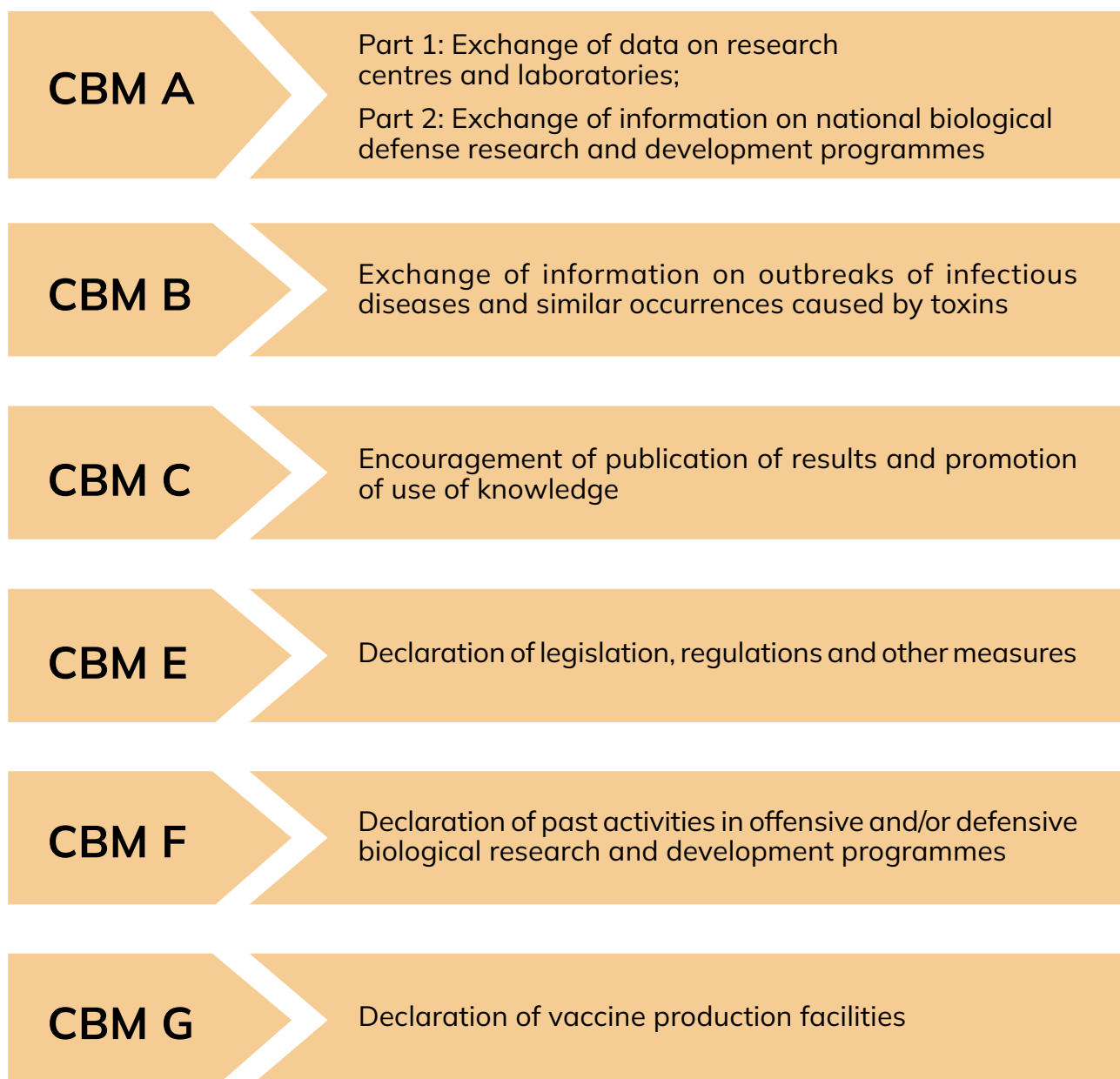


The Tianjin Biosecurity Guidelines for Codes of Conduct for Scientists (Photo credit: Advancing Biosecurity)

Participants in the BWC process have devoted growing attention to the problem of potential misuse of biological agents by terrorists or criminal groups, responding with the development of measures to make citizens in States Parties—especially relevant groups such as scientists—more aware of problems related to dual-use research. During BWC meetings, participants have discussed proposals on education, outreach and codes of conduct as methods to promote awareness of biosecurity issues.

At the Seventh Review Conference, States Parties also decided to put in place a dedicated sponsorship programme in order to support and increase the participation of experts from developing States Parties in BWC meetings.

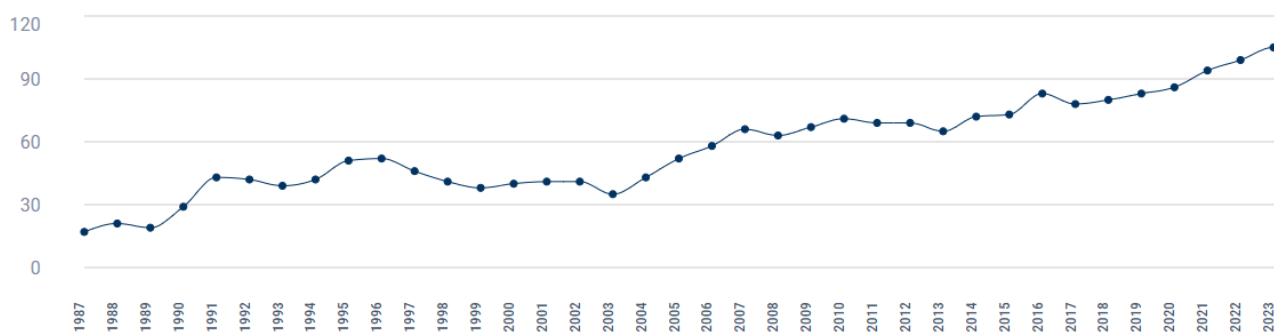
States Parties had already agreed at the Second Review Conference in 1986 to the annual exchange of information “in order to prevent or reduce the occurrence of ambiguities, doubts and suspicions and in order to improve international coordination in the field of peaceful biological activities”. States Parties decided to revise these Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) at the Third and Seventh Review Conferences in 1991 and 2011, respectively. Accordingly, CBMs currently consist of a set of six measures (CBM D was deleted from the list at the Seventh Review Conference) under which information should be provided:



While there has been a slow but steady increase in the number of submissions made by States Parties, the overall level of participation remains low, with just over half of all States Parties regularly submitting CBMs.

Efforts are being made to improve the rate of submission, including through a series of CBM capacity-building activities, as well as through a new electronic CBM platform with voluntary funding. The platform allows for the online submission of CBMs and also serves as a repository for all CBMs submitted since 1987.

Overall rate of CBM Report Submissions



Supported through voluntary contributions, UNODA is currently conducting activities aiming at promoting the universalisation and effective implementation of the BWC. Under such projects, UNODA organizes capacity-building and awareness-raising activities for parliamentarians, policymakers, and national experts, with a view to strengthening the BWC. States that would like to know more about the available assistance in relation to the BWC may contact UNODA at: bwc@un.org

How does the BWC work?

The BWC does not have an international verification regime nor does it have its own separate international organization to facilitate the full and effective implementation of the Convention.

States Parties to the BWC have strived to ensure that the Convention remains relevant and effective, in view of the developments in science and technology, politics and security since it entered into force in 1975. Throughout the years, States Parties have met approximately every five years to review the operation of the BWC.

Since the Third Review Conference in 1991, States Parties have pursued various activities and initiatives to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention between Review Conferences.

During the 1990s, for instance, BWC States Parties met regularly to negotiate a legally-binding instrument to strengthen the Convention. Yet despite 24 sessions of an Ad-Hoc Group convened in Geneva from 1995 to 2001, as well as the production of a draft protocol by the Chairman of the negotiations, Ambassador Tibor Tóth of Hungary, States Parties were ultimately unable to finalize an agreement.

BWC Meeting of States Parties at the Palais des Nations, Geneva.
(Photo credit: UNOG)



Since 2002, BWC States Parties have developed intersessional work programmes between the Review Conferences that include annual Meetings of Experts and Meetings of States Parties.

The current intersessional programme was agreed at the Ninth Review Conference in 2022. The intersessional programme from 2023 to 2026 comprises a Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention and an annual Meeting of 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 institutionalize the Convention in all its aspects.

The Working Group addresses the following seven topics:

- ▶ **International cooperation and assistance under Article X;**
- ▶ **Scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention;**
- ▶ **Confidence-building and transparency;**
- ▶ **Compliance and verification;**
- ▶ **National implementation of the Convention;**
- ▶ **Assistance, response and preparedness under Article VII;**
- ▶ **Organizational, institutional and financial arrangements.**

The Working Group is also mandated to make recommendations on the establishment of mechanisms on international cooperation and assistance and on review of developments in science and technology.

The Ninth Review Conference allocated fifteen days a year to the Working Group's substantive meetings, for the period from 2023 to 2026. The Conference urged the Working Group to complete its work as soon as possible, preferably before the end of 2025. At the completion of its work, the Working Group will adopt a report, by consensus, that will include conclusions and recommendations in line with its mandate. The adopted report will be submitted to States Parties for their consideration at the Tenth Review Conference, scheduled to take place in 2027, or earlier at a Special Conference if requested.

At the Sixth BWC Review Conference in 2006, States Parties decided to establish the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) within the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) in Geneva.

The ISU's mandate includes the following tasks:

To form the core of the Secretariat of BWC meetings

To receive and distribute information submitted annually by States Parties under the system of Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs)

To collate details of national measures to implement all aspects of the Convention and facilitate communication with and among BWC National Contact Points

To act as a clearing house for assistance, as well as administering the BWC Assistance and Cooperation Database, and to manage the BWC sponsorship programme

To interact with relevant international organizations, scientific and academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations

To attend relevant meetings and events to promote the BWC

To assist the Chair of BWC meetings in promoting universality of the Convention

To maintain details of progress towards universality and report on progress to States Parties

The Ninth Review Conference in 2022 extended the mandate of the ISU until 2027.

ANNEX I

CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION
OF THE DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION
AND STOCKPILING OF BACTERIOLOGICAL
(BIOLOGICAL) AND TOXIN WEAPONS
AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION

Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction

The States Parties to this Convention,

Determined to act with a view to achieving effective progress towards general and complete disarmament, including the prohibition and elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction, and convinced that the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons and their elimination, through effective measures, will facilitate the achievement of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control,

Recognising the important significance of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925, and conscious also of the contribution which the said Protocol has already made, and continues to make, to mitigating the horrors of war,

Reaffirming their adherence to the principles and objectives of that Protocol and calling upon all States to comply strictly with them,

Recalling that the General Assembly of the United Nations has repeatedly condemned all actions contrary to the principles and objectives of the Geneva Protocol of 17 June 1925,

Desiring to contribute to the strengthening of confidence between peoples and the general improvement of the international atmosphere,

Desiring also to contribute to the realisation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Convinced of the importance and urgency of eliminating from the arsenals of States, through effective measures, such dangerous weapons of mass destruction as those using chemical or bacteriological (biological) agents,

Recognising that an agreement on the prohibition of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons represents a first possible step towards the achievement of

agreement on effective measures also for the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons, and determined to continue negotiations to that end,

Determined, for the sake of all mankind, to exclude completely the possibility of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins being used as weapons,

Convinced that such use would be repugnant to the conscience of mankind and that no effort should be spared to minimise this risk,

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I

Each State Party to this Convention undertakes never in any circumstances to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain:

(1) microbial or other biological agents, or toxins whatever their origin or method of production, of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes;

(2) weapons, equipment or means of delivery designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.

ARTICLE II

Each State Party to this Convention undertakes to destroy, or to divert to peaceful purposes, as soon as possible but not later than nine months after the entry into force of the Convention, all agents, toxins, weapons, equipment and means of delivery specified in Article 1 of the Convention, which are in its possession or under its jurisdiction or control. In implementing the provisions of this Article all necessary safety precautions shall be observed to protect populations and the environment.

ARTICLE III

Each State Party to this Convention undertakes not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever, directly or indirectly, and not in any way to assist, encourage, or induce any State, group of States or international organisations to manufacture or otherwise acquire any of the agents, toxins, weapons, equipment or means of delivery specified in Article I of the Convention.

ARTICLE IV

Each State Party to this Convention shall, in accordance with its constitutional processes, take any necessary measures to prohibit and prevent the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition or retention of the agents, toxins, weapons, equipment and means of delivery specified in Article I of the Convention, within the territory of such State, under its jurisdiction or under its control anywhere.

ARTICLE V

The States Parties to this Convention undertake to consult one another and to co-operate in solving any problems which may arise in relation to the objective of, or in the application of the provisions of, the Convention. Consultation and co-operation pursuant to this Article may also be undertaken through appropriate international procedures within the framework of the United Nations and in accordance with its Charter.

ARTICLE VI

(1) Any State Party to this Convention which finds that any other State Party is acting in breach of obligations deriving from the provisions of the Convention may lodge a complaint with the Security Council of the United Nations. Such a complaint should include all possible evidence confirming its validity, as well as a request for its consideration by the Security Council.

(2) Each State Party to this Convention undertakes to co-operate in carrying out any investigation which the Security Council may initiate, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, on the basis of the complaint received by the Council. The Security Council shall inform the States Parties to the Convention of the results of the investigation.

ARTICLE VII

Each State Party to this Convention undertakes to provide or support assistance, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, to any Party to the Convention which so requests, if the Security Council decides that such Party has been exposed to danger as a result of violation of the Convention.

ARTICLE VIII

Nothing in this Convention shall be interpreted as in any way limiting or detracting from the obligations assumed by any State under the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925.

ARTICLE IX

Each State Party to this Convention affirms the recognised objective of effective prohibition of chemical weapons and, to this end, undertakes to continue negotiations in good faith with a view to reaching early agreement on effective measures for the prohibition of their development, production and stockpiling and for their destruction, and on appropriate measures concerning equipment and means of delivery specifically designed for the production or use of chemical agents for weapons purposes.

ARTICLE X

(1) The States Parties to this Convention undertake 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 bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins for peaceful purposes. Parties to the Convention in a position to do so shall also co-operate in contributing individually or together with other States or international organisations to the further development and application of scientific discoveries in the field of bacteriology (biology) for the prevention of disease, or for other peaceful purposes.

(2) This Convention shall be implemented in a manner designed to avoid hampering the economic or technological development of States Parties to the Convention or international co-operation in the field of peaceful bacteriological (biological) activities, including the international exchange of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins and equipment for the processing, use or production of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins for peaceful purposes in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

ARTICLE XI

Any State Party may propose amendments to this Convention. Amendments shall enter into force for each State Party accepting the amendments upon their acceptance by a majority of the States Parties to the Convention and thereafter for each remaining State Party on the date of acceptance by it.

ARTICLE XII

Five years after the entry into force of this Convention, or earlier if it is requested by a majority of Parties to the Convention by submitting a proposal to this effect to the Depositary Governments, a conference of States Parties to the Convention shall be held at Geneva, Switzerland, to review the operation of the Convention, with a view to assuring that the purposes of the preamble and the provisions of the Convention, including the provisions concerning negotiations on chemical weapons, are being realised. Such review shall take into account any new scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention.

ARTICLE XIII

(1) This Convention shall be of unlimited duration.

(2) Each State Party to this Convention shall in exercising its national sovereignty have the right to withdraw from the Convention if it decides that extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of the Convention, have jeopardised the supreme interests of its country. It shall give notice of such withdrawal to all other States Parties to the Convention and to the United Nations Security Council three months in advance. Such notice shall include a statement of the extraordinary events it regards as having jeopardised its supreme interests.

ARTICLE XIV

(1) This Convention shall be open to all States for signature. Any State which does not sign the Convention before its entry into force in accordance with paragraph 3 of this Article may accede to it at any time.

(2) This Convention shall be subject to ratification by signatory States, Instruments of ratification and instruments of accession shall be deposited with the Governments

of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America, which are hereby designated the Depositary Governments.

(3) This Convention shall enter into force after the deposit of instruments of ratification by twenty-two Governments, including the Governments designated as Depositaries of the Convention.

(4) For States whose instruments of ratification or accession are deposited subsequent to the entry into force of this Convention, it shall enter into force on the date of the deposit of their instruments of ratification or accession.

(5) The Depositary Governments shall promptly inform all signatory and acceding States of the date of each signature, the date of deposit of each instrument of ratification or of accession and the date of the entry into force of this Convention, and of the receipt of other notices.

(6) This Convention shall be registered by the Depositary Governments pursuant to Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.

ARTICLE XV

This Convention, the English, Russian, French, Spanish and Chinese texts of which are equally authentic, shall be deposited in the archives of the Depositary Governments. Duly certified copies of the Convention shall be transmitted by the Depositary Governments to the Governments of the signatory and acceding States.

ANNEX II

STATES PARTIES, SIGNATORY STATES
AND NON-SIGNATORY STATES TO THE
BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

(September 2024)

States Parties

1. Afghanistan
2. Albania
3. Algeria
4. Andorra
5. Angola
6. Antigua and Barbuda
7. Argentina
8. Armenia
9. Australia
10. Austria
11. Azerbaijan
12. Bahamas
13. Bahrain
14. Bangladesh
15. Barbados
16. Belarus
17. Belgium
18. Belize
19. Benin
20. Bhutan
21. Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
22. Bosnia and Herzegovina
23. Botswana
24. Brazil
25. Brunei Darussalam
26. Bulgaria
27. Burkina Faso
28. Burundi
29. Cabo Verde
30. Cambodia
31. Cameroon
32. Canada
33. Central African Republic
34. Chile
35. China
36. Colombia
37. Congo
38. Cook Islands
39. Costa Rica
40. Côte d'Ivoire
41. Croatia
42. Cuba
43. Cyprus
44. Czechia
45. Democratic People's Republic of Korea
46. Democratic Republic of the Congo
47. Denmark
48. Dominica
49. Dominican Republic
50. Ecuador
51. El Salvador
52. Equatorial Guinea
53. Estonia
54. Eswatini
55. Ethiopia
56. Fiji
57. Finland
58. France
59. Gabon
60. Gambia (The)
61. Georgia

62. Germany
63. Ghana
64. Greece
65. Grenada
66. Guatemala
67. Guinea
68. Guinea-Bissau
69. Guyana
70. Holy See
71. Honduras
72. Hungary
73. Iceland
74. India
75. Indonesia
76. Iran (Islamic Republic of)
77. Iraq
78. Ireland
79. Italy
80. Jamaica
81. Japan
82. Jordan
83. Kazakhstan
84. Kenya
85. Kuwait
86. Kyrgyzstan
87. Lao People's Democratic Republic
88. Latvia
89. Lebanon
90. Lesotho
91. Liberia
92. Libya
93. Liechtenstein
94. Lithuania
95. Luxembourg
96. Madagascar
97. Malawi
98. Malaysia
99. Maldives
100. Mali
101. Malta
102. Marshall Islands
103. Mauritania
104. Mauritius
105. Mexico
106. Micronesia (Federated States of)
107. Monaco
108. Mongolia
109. Montenegro
110. Morocco
111. Mozambique
112. Myanmar
113. Namibia
114. Nauru
115. Nepal
116. Netherlands (Kingdom of the)
117. New Zealand
118. Nicaragua
119. Niger
120. Nigeria
121. Niue
122. North Macedonia
123. Norway
124. Oman
125. Pakistan
126. Palau
127. Panama
128. Papua New Guinea

129. Paraguay
130. Peru
131. Philippines
132. Poland
133. Portugal
134. Qatar
135. Republic of Korea
136. Republic of Moldova
137. Romania
138. Russian Federation
139. Rwanda
140. Saint Kitts and Nevis
141. Saint Lucia
142. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
143. Samoa
144. San Marino
145. Sao Tome and Principe
146. Saudi Arabia
147. Senegal
148. Serbia
149. Seychelles
150. Sierra Leone
151. Singapore
152. Slovakia
153. Slovenia
154. Solomon Islands
155. South Africa
156. South Sudan
157. Spain
158. Sri Lanka
159. State of Palestine
160. Sudan
161. Suriname
162. Sweden
163. Switzerland
164. Tajikistan
165. Thailand
166. Timor Leste
167. Togo
168. Tonga
169. Trinidad and Tobago
170. Tunisia
171. Türkiye
172. Turkmenistan
173. Tuvalu
174. Uganda
175. Ukraine
176. United Arab Emirates
177. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
178. United Republic of Tanzania
179. United States of America
180. Uruguay
181. Uzbekistan
182. Vanuatu
183. Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
184. Viet Nam
185. Yemen
186. Zambia
187. Zimbabwe

Signatory States

1. Egypt
2. Haiti
3. Somalia
4. Syrian Arab Republic

Non-Signatory States

1. Chad
2. Comoros
3. Djibouti
4. Eritrea
5. Israel
6. Kiribati



For more information

BWC Implementation Support Unit Website:
<https://disarmament.unoda.org/biological-weapons>

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X: [@BWCISU](#)