

# **Biological Weapons Convention**

## **Meeting of States Parties, 14-18 December 2015**

### **Information for States parties, observer States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations**

1. The present Aide-Mémoire has been prepared by the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and provides preliminary information for participants of the Meeting of States Parties of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). Documentation and other information will be posted, as it becomes available, on the website of the Convention ([www.unog.ch/bwc/meeting](http://www.unog.ch/bwc/meeting)).

#### **Date and Venue**

2. The Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) will be held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 14 to 18 December 2015.
3. The Meeting will be held in conference room XVIII, E Building of the Palais des Nations, United Nations Office at Geneva, avenue de la Paix 8-14, 1211 Geneva 10, accessible via the Pregny Gate.
4. The opening plenary meeting will take place on Monday, 14 December 2015 at 10:00.

#### **Registrations and United Nations Grounds Pass**

5. All participants must be accredited. Please note that formal credentials are **not** required for the Meeting of States Parties.
6. **States parties and signatories** wishing to participate should send, through their permanent missions, a letter or note verbale to the Implementation Support Unit requesting participation and listing the full names and titles of the members of the delegation. The head of delegation should be clearly indicated.
7. **States which are neither parties nor signatories to the Convention** may apply to participate in the Meeting of States Parties as observers. A letter or note verbale should be addressed, through their permanent missions, to the Implementation Support Unit applying for observer status and listing the full names and titles of the members of the delegation. The head of delegation should be clearly indicated. Observer status is granted by the decision of the Meeting. The Meeting will consider and decide on all requests for observer status at its opening session on Monday 14 December.
8. **International organizations** may apply to participate in the Meeting of States Parties as observer agencies. A letter or note verbale should be addressed to the Implementation Support Unit applying for observer agency status, listing the full names and titles of the members of the delegation. The name of the head of delegation should be clearly indicated. Observer agency status is granted by the decision of the Meeting. The Meeting will consider and decide on all requests for observer agency status at its opening session on Monday 14 December.

9. **NGOs and academic institutions** may register to attend public sessions of the Meeting of States Parties. A letter or note verbale on the official letterhead of the organization should be addressed to the Implementation Support Unit applying for attendance of the public sessions of the meeting and listing the full names and titles of the representatives who will attend. NGOs and academic institutions that have not previously attended a BWC meeting should indicate previous interactions between the organization and the United Nations in relation to disarmament and non-proliferation issues. A mission statement or summary of work of the organization should be provided.

10. All registration letters/note verbales should reach the Implementation Support Unit **no later than Monday 30 November 2015**.

### **Valid United Nations grounds passes**

11. Valid grounds passes (issued either by the United Nations Office at Geneva or the United Nations Headquarters in New York) **are required for entry into the Palais des Nations**.

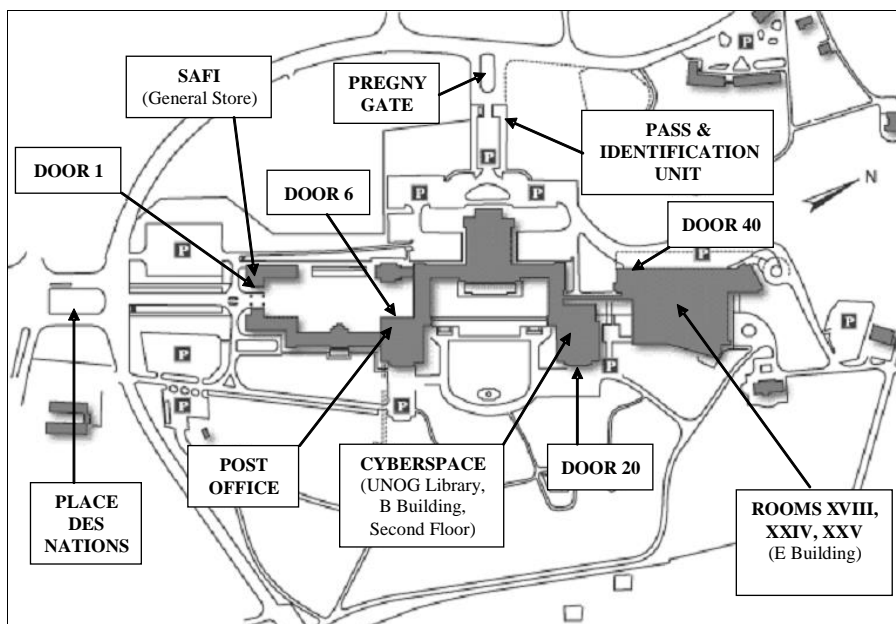
12. Participants already possessing a United Nations grounds pass may proceed directly to the Meeting.

13. For participants without a valid grounds pass, please note that it is no longer necessary to complete an online conference registration form from the Security and Safety Section of the United Nations Office at Geneva. The submission to the ISU of the letter/not verbale described above is sufficient.

14. Valid United Nations grounds passes can be collected from the Pass and Identification Unit, open Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 17:00, at the Pregny Gate of the Palais des Nations (see map below).

15. Delegations from States and international organisations can collect their passes as from 12:00 on Friday 11 December 2015. Please bring a copy of your delegations' note verbale in order to speed up the process.

16. NGO representatives can collect their passes in person from 08:00 on Monday, 14 December 2015. A valid passport or national identification card will have to be produced in order to collect a grounds pass. Only representatives whose names have been properly included in the letter or note verbale described above will be granted an access badge.



## Getting to and from the Palais des Nations

### Tram and bus

17. The Palais des Nations is served by several tram and bus lines: Buses 8, 28, F, V and Z serve Pregny Gate (Appia stop) where the Pass and Identification Unit is located. Trams number 13 and 15, as well as buses 5, 8, 11, 14, 28, V, F, and Z serve the Place des Nations. The Place des Nations, where the Nations Gate is located, is some 500 meters away from the Pregny Gate. The number 28 bus serves Geneva Cointrin Airport from the Place des Nations and the Appia stop at the Pregny Gate.

18. Further information such as itineraries, timetables, fares, etc. is available on the site of the Transports Publics Genevois (see: [www.tpg.ch](http://www.tpg.ch))

### Taxis

19. A taxi stand is located on Route de Pregny, some 25 metres from the Pregny Gate, in the direction of Place des Nations. Direct telephone number: +41 (0) 22 331 41 33. Taxis are usually available around the clock.

### Hotel accommodations and visas

20. The BWC Implementation Support Unit cannot offer financial or logistical support to assist with travel to, accommodation during, or other costs related to attending or contributing to the Meeting of States Parties. **The Implementation Support Unit is not in a position to provide letters of invitation or letters to embassies or consulates requesting that States or NGO representatives be provided visas for travelling to Switzerland in order to attend the Meeting.** It is

the responsibility of States or NGO representatives to make their own arrangements for visas, travel and related costs. Further information relating to the procedures and measures concerning the issuance of visas for Switzerland is available by contacting the Swiss embassy or consulate in the applicant's country of residence or by referring to the Swiss Federal Office for Migration ([http://www.bfm.admin.ch/content/bfm/en/home/themen/einreise/merkblatt\\_einreise.html](http://www.bfm.admin.ch/content/bfm/en/home/themen/einreise/merkblatt_einreise.html)). Further information is available on the website of the Permanent Mission of Switzerland (<https://www.dfae.admin.ch/eda/en/dfa/entry-switzerland-residence/visa-requirements-application-form.html>).

## **Attending Meetings**

21. All formal sessions of the Meeting of States Parties (including the public sessions) will be held in Room XVIII, located on the first floor of the E Building at the Palais des Nations (see map above).
22. Most side-events and NGO meetings will be held in Rooms XXIV and XXV, on the same floor of the main meeting room in the E Building. Details of the meetings scheduled for that day can be found on the screens opposite Door 40 located on the second floor of the E Building.
23. Private meetings for regional groups or other groups of States Parties may be held during the Meeting. The Secretariat will assist the Coordinators of the different groups with the announcements for such meetings and participants are kindly invited to check the notice boards regularly and/or the BWC website ([www.unog.ch/bwc](http://www.unog.ch/bwc)) for additional details.
24. An up-to-date timetable of events, including formal meetings, side events and informal sessions will be available on the Meeting of States Parties page of the BWC website ([www.unog.ch/bwc/meeting](http://www.unog.ch/bwc/meeting)).
25. Electronic boards outside each meeting room will clearly indicate whether the session in progress is public or private. All interested parties can attend public sessions. Private meetings are technically for States Parties only. Access for observer States, international organisations and guests of the meeting may be granted, on a case-by-case basis, depending upon the content of the session.
26. All side events will be public meetings and the widest possible participation is generally encouraged.
27. Food and drinks are strictly prohibited in the conference rooms. Activities involving food and drinks are allowed only in the areas designated for this purpose. Catering services should be contacted directly at [onu@eldora.ch](mailto:onu@eldora.ch), telephone number 022 917 56 19.

## **Rooms and office facilities for participants**

28. In addition to the main meeting room (room XVIII), a smaller meeting room has been reserved for use by States Parties. This may be used for regional group meetings and/or other private consultations. Room requests are issued on a first-come, first-served basis but every effort will always be made to accommodate room requests from States Parties. Those interested in reserving rooms should contact the Secretariat, located behind the conference room XVIII.
29. Delegates from States and international organizations have access to computer facilities, including internet connections and printers in the delegates' room located behind conference room XVIII. Additional computer terminals are available near

the Serpent Bar behind the conference room. Free Wi-fi access is available in the meeting rooms and generally throughout public areas of the Palais des Nations.

30. Conference rooms can be made available to NGOs **when they are not in use by States Parties**. NGOs may also make use of the computers and printers in the delegates' room but once again, **States Parties have priority**. Additional computing facilities are available near the Serpent Bar and at the Cyberspace area of the UNOG library (Door 20, B Building, see map above).

31. **Copy and reproduction facilities will not be available** to participants.

32. **A limited number** of conference participants are also able to leave large luggage with security at the Pregny gate. After being cleared by Security, baggage is stored in special lockers. The Security Service has noticed that during busy periods, such as on the last day of a meeting, numerous delegates bring their luggage with them to the Palais des Nations after having checked out of their hotel. **The Security Service wishes us to remind all delegates that once the limited storage capacity is exhausted, no additional luggage will be accepted.**

33. **For security reasons, luggage and other belongings from participants cannot be stored in the offices of the Secretariat.** The Secretariat will authorize removal of materials judged to be inappropriate.

34. Participants can also make use of the various cafes, cafeterias and restaurants in the Palais des Nations. The closest is the Serpent Bar which can be found behind Room XVIII on the first floor of the E Building. Other facilities in the E Building at the Palais des Nations which might be of interest include the UNOG Bookshop (Door 41, second floor) and the UBS bank (Door 41, second floor).

35. A Post Office and another UBS bank are located at Door 6, C Building (see map) and SAFI (a small general shop) at Door 1, S Building (see map).

## Documentation

36. Pre-session background information documents will be prepared by the Implementation Support Unit. The background and procedural documents will be made available in advance of the Meeting of States Parties.

37. States Parties wishing to submit official documents for the Meeting (information documents, working papers, etc.) should provide both electronic and hard copies to the Implementation Support Unit. Electronic copies should be sent to [bwc@unog.ch](mailto:bwc@unog.ch). Please get in touch to discuss your specific requirements.

38. States and international organizations granted observer status might also wish to provide information to delegations at the Meeting of States Parties. Documents should be submitted in electronic and hard copy to the Implementation Support Unit. Electronic copies should be sent to [bwc@unog.ch](mailto:bwc@unog.ch).

39. NGOs are not permitted to submit official documents to the Meeting.

40. Official documents of the Meeting of States Parties will be made available for collection from the documents booth inside conference room XVIII. Participants are reminded to check whether a private meeting is taking place before entering this room. The documents will also be made available on the BWC website ([www.unog.ch/bwc](http://www.unog.ch/bwc)) as they become available.

## **Secretariat**

41. Further enquires regarding attendance and participation in the Meeting of States Parties should be addressed to:

BWC Implementation Support Unit  
United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs  
United Nations Office at Geneva  
Palais des Nations,  
CH-1211 Geneva 10  
Switzerland  
Tel: +41 (0)22 917 2230  
Fax: +41 (0)22 917 0034  
Email: [bwc@unog.ch](mailto:bwc@unog.ch)

42. Additional information, including documents related to the Meeting of States Parties, will be posted on the BWC website, prior to, during and after the session and can be found at: <http://www.unog.ch/bwc/meeting>.