



## SUMMARY REPORT

# Awareness Raising Workshop for Decision-makers and Sharing Best Practices for Implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention

*9-10 June, Kathmandu, Nepal*

### Overview

The second national workshop on the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) was held in Kathmandu, Nepal 9-10 June. The workshop was part of an assistance programme for Nepal and was organised by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), through the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) and the UNODA-Geneva Branch, with financial support from the European Union (EU), and in cooperation with the government of Nepal. Representatives from 16 national departments and agencies, a majority of them senior officials, attended the workshop.

The workshop focused on addressing the issue of national implementation measures and the relevance of establishing a BWC National Committee. Experts from the government of Malaysia and India shared their own national experiences, and VERTIC (the Verification Research, Training and Information Centre), UNODA Geneva and UNRCPD enhanced the understanding of Nepal by presenting the key issue of BWC implementation.



### Day One

The first day of the workshop began with a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) expressing Nepal's focus on international conventions and praising the UN offices' efforts in this event. The focus on the first day of the workshop was the BWC and its implementation, as well as an exchange of national experiences for establishing a national authority.

### BWC & IMPLEMENTATION

International experts presented on various aspects of the treaty. The importance of strengthening the BWC, several types of assistance programmes available through the UN, and the new direction of the Convention, focusing on improving and coordinating national implementation, were all discussed. The benefits of joining the Convention and the process of ratification were also presented. Representatives from Malaysia and India shared their countries' experiences regarding national implementation of the BWC, as well as detailed information about biorisk management. Discussion mainly focused on the issue of biosafety and biosecurity management.



### NATIONAL AUTHORITY: FUNCTIONS AND PROPOSALS

The aim of this panel was to stimulate the exchange of views between the various participants. To assist in the development of a national authority, the panellists discussed the potential content and functions of such a body, including its legal, administrative and technical functions. The invited countries shared their experiences and best practices, regarding the functions of their own national authorities, and exchanged focal points to aid further assistance and collaboration. During the discussion, the representatives from Nepal expressed their interests in the existing case of Malaysia and India, particularly regarding the functions of their national agencies as well as legislative structures.





## Day Two

Day Two focused on the national legal framework, implementation, and capacity building of Nepal. In addition, the representative from Malaysia presented on the importance of implementation and management of biosafety and biosecurity measures. The final day of the workshop saw successful substantive discussions regarding the next step for national implementation.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BWC IN THE NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF NEPAL

VERTIC discussed national implementation measures specific to Nepal, including a summary of existing national BWC legislation, with emphasis on essential components, such as: jurisdiction, transfer control, and enforcement. Next, UNRCPD presented an overview of national implementation and capacity building. Relevant regional issues and factors were highlighted, followed by an outline of the experiences various countries in the region have had in implementing the BWC. The presentation gave participants valuable insight into region wide issues related to the BWC, and a variety of different national perspectives and approaches regarding implementation and capacity building.

## FINAL DISCUSSION

During the final discussion session, a majority of the discussion focused on the issue of legal frameworks, both in general and specific to Nepal. In addition, a few of the participants raised their concerns regarding the issue of biosecurity and risk assessment. Based on a mutual understanding of the unique context of Nepal, it was agreed that further efforts in the legislation process is necessary. In addition, UNRCPD was requested by Nepal regarding the further capacity building.

## Conclusion

The workshop was highly successful, fully meeting the stated project aims. The participants discussed the process of national implementation of the BWC, and the representative from India and Malaysia shared knowledge from their own experiences. UNODA, UNRCPD and VERTIC will continue to support the Government of Nepal in its efforts to establish the required National Authority and legal framework for the BWC. Workshop participants were provided with packages, including copies of the presentations and other related materials, with the aim of effectively disseminating information to other relevant government personnel and for future utilisation. A representative for MOFA, Nepal expressed their satisfaction and appreciation for the workshop to UNODA, UNRCPD and VERTIC, as well thanking the special guests from India and Malaysia. Acknowledging the importance of wide participation to the success of international treaties, they affirmed Nepal's strong will to ratify and implement the BWC.

## Participating Nepalese Government Agencies

Ministry of Home Affairs  
 Ministry of Defence  
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
 Ministry of Agriculture  
 Ministry of Customs  
 Ministry of Mine and Geology  
 Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment  
 Ministry of Law, Justice, Constituent Assembly and Parliamentary Affairs  
 Ministry of Education  
 Nepal Chamber of Commerce  
 Nepal Army  
 Nepal Police  
 Armed Police Force  
 Nepal Academy of Science and Technology  
 National Forensic Science Laboratory  
 National Public Health Laboratory, Ministry of Health and Population

