



SUMMARY REPORT

Workshop on National Implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention 20-21 February, Kathmandu, Nepal

Overview

At the invitation of the Government of Nepal, 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) organised a national workshop, attended by almost 25 Government officials and BWC experts, on the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) for the Government of Nepal. The aim of the workshop was to bring together all the national stakeholders and implementing authorities in Nepal with regional and international experts on the subject, to plan a course of action for the national implementation of the BWC.

Representatives from 12 Nepalese national agencies received information on topics including: modalities for national coordination; legislative, administrative and enforcement measures; awareness-raising; the creation of codes of conduct and standards on biosafety and biosecurity; BWC national implementation in Asia and the Pacific; national requirements and needs for strengthening BWC implementation; and, the concept of the Action Plan.



The initial discussions focused on: an introduction to the BWC; the ratification process and the legislative and administrative framework, and enforcement; confidence-building measures; national implementation and organisation at the national level; BWC national implementation cases in Asia and the Pacific; national requirements and needs for strengthening BWC implementation in Nepal; and an initial discussion of the Action Plan for an Assistance Programme.

Examination of the Biological Weapons Convention

International experts presented on various aspects of the treaty. It was noted that a large majority of states in Asia and the Pacific are party to the BWC, and the various benefits to states party to the BWC were also emphasised throughout the presentations. Also, national biosafety and biosecurity measures were identified as playing a key role in preventing biological weapons proliferation. Discussions focused on issues such as past use of biological and toxic weapons, further clarification of state requirements and obligations under the treaty, the existence of an international administrative body for the BWC, and the creation/nomination of a national focal point and national authority for the treaty.

National Implementation: Experiences

An overview was presented on BWC national implementation in Asia and the Pacific. Relevant regional issues and factors were discussed, followed by an outline of the experiences of countries in the region in implementing the BWC. The presentation outlined region-wide issues related to the BWC, as well as a variety of different national perspectives and approaches regarding implementation.

Experience of Nepal

Shifting from a regional to a national focus, a representative from Nepal presented on the requirements and needs for strengthening BWC implementation in Nepal. Discussion focused on why Nepal should implement the BWC and an outline of the various issues that Nepal will encounter during the implementation process.



Action Plan for Assistance Programme

The concept of a national Action Plan was explained and sample plans and events from other countries were presented. The importance of constructing an Action Plan that was best suited to the national needs and characteristics of Nepal was emphasised. Discussion during this session focused on administrative issues, what the Plan will achieve, and an initial discussion on events that could be included in an Action Plan.

International experts provided examples emphasising the importance of factoring in national conditions in the Action Plan and implementation in general, as well as the need for thorough planning. The ratification and implementation process in general was outlined and referenced the specific context of Nepal. Discussions during this session focused on clarification of the scope and composition of potential Action Plan events, as well as administrative issues.



Conclusion

The workshop was a success, firmly achieving its aims. By the conclusion of the two-day event there had been significant information presented and discussed relating to the BWC. Participants had actively engaged in discussions, with all participants encouraged by the process and agreed outcomes. An important outcome of this Workshop was that participants from 12 different government agencies, all involved in some way with BWC

implementation in Nepal, were able to meet and discuss national implementation issues face-to-face and that the way forward was unanimously charted. This also resulted in offers of increased co-operation and communication amongst agencies themselves.



Participating Nepalese Government Agencies

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

External Expert Agencies

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BWC-ISU