



Geneva

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**Meeting of Experts on Assistance, Response and Preparedness
(MX4)**

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

As we get closer to the MX4, I would like to share with you some more detailed information as well as my intentions on how to proceed during the meeting.

You will have received the draft provisional agenda for MX4 with the letter of 14 June. The formal provisional agenda has been available in all official languages for some time as [BWC/MSP/2018/MX.4/1](#).

As is clear from the provisional agenda we will address all the agenda items decided upon by the 2017 MSP. I have prepared the attached annotated programme of work as a guide for our discussions in MX4. In order to be efficient with time we will use a rolling agenda, meaning that if the discussions on an agenda item dries up and there are no more contributions from delegations, we will move on to the next agenda item.

At the time of writing, we have received contributions of five working papers, which are available on the ISU [website](#), and there may be some additional working papers coming. During the discussions my intention is to allow delegations to present their working papers and I then encourage all delegations in their statements to also engage in an interactive discussion, commenting on proposals and putting questions forward if something is not clear. This of course does in no way preclude delegations from raising other issues as well.

The working papers have been allocated in the annotated programme of work to the agenda item where they seem most appropriate, in consultation with the submitting States Parties.

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It is also to be noted that some working papers are relevant under several agenda items, one example being [BWC/MSP/2018/MX4/WP.1](#) “*Assistance and protection from biological weapons in the context of Article VII of the BWC*” from the Russian Federation. It could be possible that parts of those working papers would also be addressed under different agenda items.

Furthermore, since States Parties work on Article VII in the BWC is by no mean a new enterprise, I would encourage delegations to also study some previously submitted working papers. A few of them have been further developed and have been resubmitted to the MX4, but some have not and may be relevant for the discussions of the MX4. Among them, I would highlight working paper [BWC/MSP/2015/MX/WP.7](#) “*Proposal for establishment of a database for assistance in the framework of Article VII of the BWC*” submitted by France and India providing some concrete proposals. It could also be useful to look at [BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.1/Rev.2](#) from the preparatory committee to the review conference, where the concept of mobile biomedical units, which is to be discussed as an agenda item in MX4, is explained in a bit more detail than in MX4/WP.1. Please also refer to the background paper produced by the ISU ([BWC/MSP/2018/MX.4/2](#)) which includes in its annexes additional agreements and common understandings on Article VII previously agreed by States Parties.

There are certainly many other previously submitted working papers that may be of value for the MX4 discussions and by only mentioning two of them I certainly do not intend to disrespect the other working papers and the work that has gone into them, and if a delegation during the meeting would like to recall a previous working paper that is of relevance for the discussion then that is of course welcomed.

During the meeting it will also be useful that we will have the presence of some international organisations and where relevant they will take the floor and present and reflect upon their experiences of working on issues related to Assistance, Response and Preparedness.

In preparing the MX4, I have benefited from the response by several States Parties to the MSP Chair’s letter dated 2 May with suggestions on what MX4 should address as well as from the meetings organised before the summer where delegations were given the opportunity to express their views on this matter.

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It's clear from the contributions of State Parties in this preparatory process that the topics to be addressed in MX4 are areas where there are certain commonalities in the positions of States Parties. Several delegations from different geographical groups, delegations that may in other areas of the BWC voice differing opinions, have expressed that they will seek and see a realistic possibility of some concrete outcomes to strengthen the BWC on the topics addressed under MX4. This is also reflected by the fact that at the 2016 Review Conference, States Parties did agree on language on this area.

I am encouraged by this fact and will do my best to facilitate the discussion among the delegations and look forward to constructive engagements and useful sessions.

Yours sincerely,

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Biological Weapons Convention

Meeting of Experts on Assistance, Response and Preparedness (MX4)¹

14-15 August 2018

Day	Session
Tue, 14 Aug	AM (10:00 – 13:00)
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Opening of the Meeting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remarks by the Chair, Mr. Daniel Nord of Sweden 2. <u>Adoption of the agenda</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BWC/MSP/2018/MX.4/1 3. <u>Adoption of the rules of procedure</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BWC/CONF.VIII/2 4. <u>Practical challenges facing the implementation of Article VII, and possible solutions</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BWC/MSP/2018/MX.4/WP.5 - Recent International Developments Relevant to Article VII - Submitted by the United States of America
	PM (15:00 – 18:00)
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. <u>A set of guidelines and formats to assist a State Party, if required, when submitting an application for assistance in the framework of Article VII</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BWC/MSP/2018/MX.4/WP.3 - Implementation of Article VII – Submitted by South Africa 6. <u>Procedures, including the establishment and use of the assistance database, to improve the prompt and efficient response without preconditions to a request of assistance by a State Party under Article VII, and coordination and cooperation among States Parties and with relevant international and regional organizations such as World Health Organization (WHO), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), as appropriate</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BWC/MSP/2018/MX.4/WP.4 - Provision of assistance to a State Party that has been exposed as a result of a violation of the Convention - Submitted by South Africa
Wed, 15 Aug	AM (10:00 – 13:00)
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. <u>Examination of how the concept of mobile biomedical units might contribute to effective assistance, response and preparation with a view to enhancing implementation of the Convention</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BWC/MSP/2018/MX.4/WP.1 - Assistance and protection from biological weapons in the context of Article VII of the Biological Weapons Convention - Submitted by the Russian Federation

¹ This is an indicative listing and will be updated as additional working papers are submitted. States Parties can of course request to take the floor under any agenda item. Those wishing to do so, particularly if intending to deliver a technical presentation, should contact the ISU as soon as possible so that the appropriate arrangements can be made.

	<p>8. <u>Exploration of approaches by which States Parties, individually or collectively, might contribute to the strengthening of international response capabilities for infectious disease outbreaks, whether natural or deliberate in origin</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BWC/MSP/2018/MX.4/WP.2 - The United Kingdom public health rapid support team concept - Submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	<p>PM (15:00 – 18:00)</p>
	<p>9. <u>Exploration of means to prepare for, respond to and render assistance in case of the possible hostile use of biological agents and toxins against agriculture, livestock as well as the natural environment</u></p> <p>10. <u>Adoption of the factual report reflecting the deliberations of the Meeting, including possible outcomes</u></p> <p>11. <u>Closing of the Meeting</u></p>