Synthesis of considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals drawn from the presentations, statements, working papers and interventions on the topics under discussion at the Meeting of Experts

Submitted by the Chairman

This document focuses on new material introduced at the 2015 Meeting of Experts, and does not include concepts that appeared in the 2014 , 2013 or 2012 synthesis papers to avoid repetition.

I. Cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X

A. Challenges and obstacles to developing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in the biological sciences and technology, including equipment and material, for peaceful purposes to their full potential, and possible means of overcoming these

To strengthen efforts to overcome challenges and obstacles to developing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in the biological sciences and technology, States Parties should:

a. In the light of new science and technology developments, enhance international efforts to bridge the increasing gaps in the field of biotechnology, genetic engineering, microbiology and other related disciplines between developed and developing countries;

b. Make efforts to identify and overcome obstacles in the implementation of Article X to generate equitable benefits for States Parties, in particular for developing countries;

c. Ensure timely access to affordable drugs and vaccines and related diagnostic, preventive and therapeutic equipment to affected people, especially in developing countries, as highlighted by the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa in 2014; and

d. Support a more full exchange and access between States of equipment, materials, scientific personnel, publications and scientific and technological information, in the field of life sciences and related areas destined for peaceful purposes.

B. A range of specific measures for the full and comprehensive implementation of Article X taking into account all of its provisions, including facilitation of cooperation and assistance, including in terms of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for peaceful purposes, and identification of critical gaps and needs in these areas

States Parties able to do so, and upon request of the interested parties may implement, among others, the following measures, as a contribution especially to developing countries:

a. To help create an appropriate national system of health care that can respond effectively to disease outbreaks;

b. To contribute to the training of necessary human resources to fight outbreaks of diseases;

c. To transfer technologies to help improve national capacities for diagnosis, research and response to disease outbreaks, including means of protection; and

d. To promote academic and scientific exchange between national experts related to biosafety.

To further address a range of specific measures for the full and comprehensive implementation of Article X taking into account all of its provisions, including facilitation of cooperation and assistance, States Parties should:

a. Continue and increase the use of the database for cooperation and assistance hosted on the website of the ISU to improve the results of the exchange, and strengthen national capacities;

b. Encourage long-term, sustainable cooperation that meets the needs of the receiving countries;

c. Promote free access to scientific publications through the reduction of possible barriers imposed by the high costs of subscriptions;

d. Share relevant information about the opportunities and challenges resulting from scientific advances in the life sciences and in biotechnology, disease outbreaks, biological custody and healthcare; and

e. Ensure that States Parties have access to the benefits of advances in life sciences, in order to take advantage of recent advances including new technologies, production or development of vaccines, biological production technologies, equipment and training for high-containment laboratories, and taking into account the necessity for developing countries to address challenges related to public health.

C. Ways and means to target and mobilize resources, including financial resources, to address gaps and needs for assistance and cooperation, in particular from developed to developing States Parties, and from international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders

To further reinforce efforts to work together to target and mobilize resources, States Parties noted the value of:

a. Promoting the relevance of the Convention to both signatories and non- State Parties that, rarely, participate in the meetings of the BWC. States Parties should give serious consideration to the extension of support to the developing countries to increase the level of participation in all meetings of the BWC;

b. Agreeing on regional implementation plans across the world with consent and involvement of States concerned;

c. Utilizing the cooperation and assistance database established in pursuance of the decision of the 7th review Conference for targeting resources by State Parties offering assistance and cooperation by making concrete offers in areas directly relevant to the Convention.

D. Education, training, exchange and twinning programmes and other means of developing human resources in the biological sciences and technology relevant to the implementation of the Convention, particularly in developing countries

States Parties acknowledged that exchanges in education and training are of fundamental importance for the development of human resources in the field of biological sciences.

International cooperation in education and training will be able to bridge the gap between the capabilities of developing and developed countries.

E. Capacity-building, through international cooperation, in biosafety and biosecurity, and for detecting, reporting, and responding to outbreaks of infectious disease or biological weapons attacks, including in the areas of preparedness, response, and crisis management and mitigation

States Parties noted that recent disease outbreaks reinforce the need for a continued and concerted international effort to build countries' capacities to effectively mitigate the risk posed to global health security by pathogenic microorganisms.

While there is a legitimate need for biocontainment facilities worldwide, the inherent dual-use potential of these facilities and related equipment – as well as of the pathogens they contain and the skills developed through hands-on work – merit scrutiny in a world where terrorism and the proliferation of weapons-relevant materials, technologies, and expertise pose genuine threats

F. Coordination of cooperation with other relevant international and regional organizations, and other relevant stakeholders

States Parties recognized that relevant international and regional organizations such as WHO and OIE play an important role in disease surveillance, prevention, detection and response and there is therefore merit in coordination of cooperation with them in accordance with their respective mandates.

States Parties also noted that the unique role of the BWC, as a Convention which deals with security related issues, needs to be recognized and further efforts should be made for full and effective implementation of Article X within the Convention itself.

II. Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention

A. Advances in production, dispersal and delivery technologies of biological agents and toxins

States Parties identified certain advances in the understanding of production, dispersal and delivery technologies of biological agents and toxins that have potential benefits for the Convention and agreed on the need to share information on these developments, including:

a. Advances in production technologies, such as:

i. using microorganisms to produce novel materials;
ii. increasing demand for single-use bioreactor systems in commercial production processes;
iii. developments in transgenic animals and plants as a means of producing therapeutics and vaccines;
iv. advances in peptide production;
v. 3-D printing technology, that may have implications for the production of biological agents and toxins in the future; and
vi. Portable biological containment systems.

b. Advances in dispersal technologies, such as:

i. Delivery of drugs and vaccines - such as use of microneedles - may ultimately result in higher vaccination rates and enable self-administration of drugs that would otherwise require visits to a healthcare professional;
ii. Field trials on the use of unmanned aerial vehicles;
iii. Techniques for analysis of aerosolised droplets; and
iv. biological control measures using antagonistic agents against plant pathogens, including new formulations with improved viability and persistence.

c. Advances in delivery technologies, such as:

i. development of a nanoparticle system for needle-free vaccine delivery to the lungs by aerosol or nasal delivery;
ii. the use of many other nanomaterials in drug delivery;
iii. Nanomaterial based approaches, that have the potential for delivery of genetic elements, for example in gene therapy;
iv. DNA origami for the design and fabrication of self-assembled nanodevices;
v. Increased understanding of the mechanism by which anthrax toxin enters cells; and
vi. Advances of relevance to agriculture, such as improved biological control methods to combat plant pests and diseases, and approaches to improve production of food components.

States Parties, noting that the developments reviewed above could also have the potential for uses contrary to the provisions of the Convention, agreed to:

a. Consider the establishment of a working group of scientific experts, including experts from academia and industry, to analyze and review the latest scientific advances with potential implications for the Convention;

b. Continue efforts to promote greater collaboration with the CWC in light of the growing convergence between the fields of chemistry and biology;

c. Seek greater clarity on aspects of range of types and quantities of such agents and toxins, whether naturally occurring or altered which potentially could pose a risk to the Convention, for the purpose of reaching common understandings on criteria for assessing risks of relevance to the Convention.

B. New science and technology developments that have potential for uses contrary to the provisions of the Convention

States Parties agreed that some of the developments reviewed have the potential for uses contrary to the provisions of the Convention, including:

a. Developments in production technologies which improve yield, speed, flexibility, cost-effectiveness, portability, availability and safety that could also be applicable for the production of biological or toxin weapons agents;

b. Improved dispersal and delivery methods which have the potential to be misused for hostile purposes;

c. The increasing sophistication and worldwide spread of synthetic biology, together with other enabling technologies;

d. Research that is identified as being of dual-use concern raises the following issues:
   i. The lack of criteria for identifying research as being in contravention of the BWC prevents a timely assessment of the results of the work and hinders efforts to restrict wide access to this dangerous information;
   ii. Gene drives and their potential risks;
   iii. The growing marginalization of the need to possess real scientific information on the internet.

C. New science and technology developments that have potential benefits for the Convention, including those of special relevance to disease surveillance, diagnosis and mitigation

States Parties identified certain advances that have potential benefits for the Convention and agreed on the need to share information on these developments, including those of special relevance to disease surveillance, diagnosis and mitigation:

a. Advances of relevance to agriculture, such as improved biological control methods to combat plant pests and diseases, and approaches to improve production of food components;
b. The new advances and researches in biology, biotechnology, bioengineering and biomedical engineering, in particular, developments in enabling technologies including high-throughput systems for sequencing, synthesizing and analyzing DNA, bioinformatics and computational tools and systems biology, host-pathogen interactions for enhanced cooperation and making vaccines, medicines and diagnostics production simpler, faster, cheaper and more efficient in developing countries;
c. The advances in immunology, such as the CRISPR/Cas system to edit, silence and activate genes at any given site in virtually any kind of genome, including human cells.

D. Possible measures for strengthening national biological risk management

States Parties identified possible measures for strengthening national biological risk management, as appropriate, in research and development, including:

a. A comprehensive examination of appropriate oversight criteria, of optimal methods for assessing risks and benefits, and of optimal approaches to mitigating risks identified at BWC meetings;

b. Introducing additional requirements to regulate dual-use immaterial technology in the form of sensitive know-how and skills that may be misused in the context of biological weapons development;

c. Developing criteria on whether research applies to the BWC, to serve as a starting point for organizing a system of control or oversight measures by the international community for the purposes of monitoring dual-use research which could risk the development of biological weapons; and

d. Developing a code of conduct for biosecurity, to help individual researchers in their assessment of risks and benefits.

E. Voluntary codes of conduct and other measures to encourage responsible conduct

In order to further promote voluntary codes of conduct and other measures designed to encourage responsible conduct, States Parties should:

a. Bring in a diverse range of expertise from academia and industry, to assist in identifying and reviewing relevant advances, and in considering their implications for implementation of various aspects of the Convention;
b. Avoid subjecting codes of conduct to any restrictions on exchange of scientific discoveries in the field of biology for peaceful purposes

F. Education and awareness-raising about risks and benefits of life sciences and biotechnology

States Parties recognized that, the continuous and accelerating rate of progress in scientific knowledge implies the necessity of deepening a culture of responsible use of this knowledge, which takes into account biological disarmament without undermining peaceful uses.

In order to further efforts on education and awareness-raising about risks and benefits of life sciences and biotechnology, States Parties agreed on the need to share information on these developments, including:

a. Gain of function research;
b. Dual-use Research of Concern.

G. Science- and technology-related developments relevant to the activities of multilateral organizations such as the WHO, OIE, FAO, IPPC and OPCW

The increasing convergence of chemistry and biology underlines the importance of continuing to build and sustain coordination between the Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention to assist analysis of the potential benefits and risks resulting from advances in scientific and technological areas of mutual interest.

The overlap continues to blur even further the boundaries between what constitutes biology and chemistry and the impact that 'convergence' has on the provisions of the two regimes needs to be kept under review to avoid gaps opening.

H. Any other science and technology developments of relevance to the Convention

States Parties noted the potential relevance of other science and technology developments, including:

a. Tacit knowledge, defined as the set of skills and understanding gained only through direct experience, is an important consideration in assessing the risk of biological weapons production and proliferation;
b. The lessons identified by assessments of the international response to the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in West Africa is the need to expand investment in research and development on diagnostics, drugs and vaccines.

States Parties emphasized the need for a structured, systematic and ongoing process for the review of relevant advances, the importance of holding regular reviews of the developments in science and technology related to the Convention, and the following ideas were discussed:

a. An expert working group on science and technology that can thoroughly review the relevant scientific literature and, through reports and presentations, keep delegations up-to-date regarding the latest scientific advances with potential implications for the Convention;
b. A technical body under the BWC dedicated to reviewing scientific and technological developments will provide a more robust and comprehensive technical basis on which to base policy decisions and a firmer foundation for the future evolution of the Convention;
c. A panel composed of experts nominated by States Parties, addressing scientific and technological developments on a continuing basis through an appropriate mechanism established for this purpose which is led and driven by States Parties to the Convention.

III. Strengthening national implementation

A. Specific measures

To further address a range of specific measures for the full and comprehensive implementation of the Convention, especially Articles III and IV, States Parties agreed on the value, depending on national needs and circumstances and in accordance with national laws and regulations, of the following:

a. Continuing to enact, enforce and review national implementation measures, and to provide comprehensive reports on such activities, in order to provide further reassurance about effective implementation of the Convention, which might include:
    i. Domestic legislation;
    ii. Regulations on the transfers of BWC relevant materials, equipment and information;
    iii. National biosafety, biosecurity measures;
    iv. Seeking external assistance, including through the BWC Assistance and Cooperation Database, the offer by States Parties which have export licensing measures in place to provide assistance on implementation of export controls for chemical and biological transfers, and regional cooperation.

b. Recalling that the Seventh Review Conference called for appropriate measures, including effective national export controls, by all States Parties to implement Article III, States Parties noted the importance of such measures in reducing levels of concern and enhancing international exchange of life science-related knowledge, equipment and materials. States Parties recognised that the following points are key elements of an effective national export control system:
    i. Address transfers of tangible and intangible goods;
    ii. Clear and comprehensive laws and regulations, that establish necessary legal authorities and appropriate penalties for violations;
    iii. Procedures and mechanisms for appealing licensing decisions, investigating possible violations, and enforcing rules and penalties;
    iv. A list of items focused on the materials and technologies needed to develop, produce, or stockpile biological weapons. Such lists should be regularly reviewed and updated as necessary;
    v. Controls on technology directly associated with listed items;
    vi. A “catch-all” provision that obligates exporters to seek government permission for an export if they have reason to suspect the export is intended to contribute to the development, production, or stockpiling of biological weapons;
    vii. Regular outreach to life science researchers and the biotechnology industry concerning these requirements to ensure awareness and compliance.

c. Strengthening implementation of all provisions of the Convention, including those in Article X;

B. Ways and means to enhance national implementation, sharing best practices and experiences

To further reinforce efforts to enhance national implementation and sharing of best practice and experiences, States Parties agreed on the value of:

a. Effective national legislation, by:
b. Managing the risks of the misuse of research ;
c. Continuous capacity-building.
d. domestic biosecurity regulations and capabilities;
e. export controls on sensitive materials;
f. reassurance, which can be achieved by: increased transparency and practical demonstrations of continued commitment to the Convention, participation in the system of Confidence-Building Measures, making CBMs returns publicly available;
g. cross-regional cooperation, through partnership programmes, or by providing the necessary financial resources to States in need.

C. Regional and sub-regional cooperation that can assist national implementation of the Convention

States Parties agreed on the value of regional and sub-regional cooperation that can assist national implementation:

a. Through the strengthening of a global, systematic and long-term approach to the provision of cooperation and assistance;
b. Through improved methods that facilitate the effective implementation of the Convention at the national level (as regards the work on Ebola in East African countries and information exchanges).

D. National, regional and international measures to improve laboratory biosafety and security of pathogens and toxins

To further efforts to mitigate biological risks, States Parties noted the value of, in accordance with national laws and regulations:

a. Establishing a regime that seeks the best custody of biological agents and their vectors (biosecurity);
b. The biosecurity measures directed at the prevention of illicit acts should be designed to:
    i. Dissuade these acts;
    ii. Detect and impede access that is not authorised or the loss or theft of materials and biological agents;
    iii. Rapidly evaluate the events that could have suggested an irregular situation and/or the disruption of the biosecurity measures in the facility and in handling the materials and biological agents in order to permit a swift reaction to mitigate the corresponding effects; and
    iv. Make a provision of the elements that may allow a swift response in the event of a disruption of the biosecurity measures.
c. sharing ideas about how best to manage dual use risks, whether those ideas will be implemented or not;
d. examining comprehensively appropriate oversight criteria, of optimal methods to assess risks and benefits, and of optimal approaches to mitigating risks identified at BWC meetings;
e. improving capacity building for biosafety and security according to their specific situations, to raise their level of management and transparency for dual-use bioscience and technology research, to establish risk assessment and early warning systems for the misuse of bioscience and technology, and to raise awareness of research personnel concerning biosafety and security
f. Through the expertise of WHO, supporting projects aimed at promoting biorisk awareness, laboratory biorisk management; and by developing Centres of Excellence, mobilising resources to develop coherent and adequate CBRN policies;
g. Establishing regulations/authorizations on Microorganisms and Toxins (MOT)

E. Any potential further measures, as appropriate, relevant for implementation of the Convention

To further strengthen the implementation of the Convention, States Parties ~~agreed on~~ discussed the value of:

a. further discussing how best to improve methods of work at meetings;
b. Creating tools to enable States Parties to demonstrate their compliance;
c. Identifying new approaches, to enhance national implementation through voluntary exchanges of information, such as the peer review mechanism;
d. Giving the CBMs a role in the peer review exercise;
e. An Open-Ended Working Group to elaborate on a basis of consensus appropriate measures and draft proposals to strengthen the Convention;
f. Reassurance, by demonstrating a willingness to co-operate with other States Parties in resolving alleged breaches (Article V or VI), and to assist other States Parties in the event of a biological incident whether a natural outbreak, accidental release of biological agents, or a deliberate use of biological weapons (Article VII). This could include:
g. building an operational capability (i.e. through generating a list of experts) that could be called upon to assist in responding to a biological incident, in the absence of a full-time inspectorate;
h. extending the UN Secretary General's Mechanism to investigate suspected biological weapons facilities and allegations of use, drawing on experiences with the investigations of chemical weapon use in Syria.
i. An effective and substantive preparatory process towards the 2016 Review Conference; and
j. Working towards identifying options that could achieve similar objectives to s a legally binding protocol to the Convention'

k. Initiatives that are cross-regional, spanning various groups, and achieve broad ranging support in key issues such as national implementation are a positive step forwards.

IV. How to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties

Recognizing a need to strengthen the international community's capacity to effectively provide assistance related to Article VII and having considered relevant agreements reached at past review conferences and common understandings identified at previous Meetings of States Parties related to Article VII, States Parties agreed on the value of:

a. The primary responsibility for assisting its population resting with the State Party;
b. Assistance, or the provision of support, being provided promptly and efficiently and only upon the request of the affected States Party when:
c. Biological or toxin weapons have been used, or are suspected of being used by any States(s) or other entity against a States Party;
d. A States Party is threatened by actions or activities of any State or other entity that are prohibited for States Parties by Article I;
e. Preparations being made in advance of Article VII being invoked, including:
    i. A coordinated government approach to emergency management;
    ii. Addressing the full range of possible implications;
    iii. Establishing clear channels of communication;
    iv. Accessing relevant expert advice; and
    v. Working to improve effective cooperation between the law enforcement and health sectors;
f. Humanitarian assistance in cases of the threat of the use of a biological weapon; and
g. Emergency human, animal and plant health and humanitarian responses prior to a decision being taken by the Security Council which would formally trigger Article VII, so as to ensure efficient, effective response to an outbreak at the earliest possible point, and ensuring that transition to formal activation of Article VII provisions is seamless and complementary.

Recognizing that there are both strong similarities and differences between responses to a deliberate disease outbreak and a natural one, and agreeing on the value of drawing lessons from natural outbreaks such as the 2014 West African Ebola disease outbreak, States Parties noted:

a. The importance in both cases of a rapid response with clear lines of command and control, as well as effective communication and coordination;
b. The value of effective coordination and cooperation with relevant international health and humanitarian organizations, such as WHO, FAO, OIE, IPPC, OCHA and the ICRC, in accordance with their mandates;
c. The importance of social anthropological understanding of cultural norms to ensure rapid engagement with local communities during the response; and
d. The importance of recognising that, in the case of a deliberate outbreak, response teams could face additional challenges, having to operate in a potentially hostile environment and/or alongside national or international investigations efforts.

Recalling past discussions on the implementation of Article VII and national capacity building, States Parties reaffirmed that:

a. National capacities and national health systems are the first line of defence in case of an outbreak;
b. Collaborating to build national capacity and preparedness also enhances international capabilities;
c. Even where national capacity is strong, further international assistance may be required in the case of an outbreak; and
d. The presence or absence of national capabilities should not be imposed as a precondition for provision or receipt of assistance.

Recognizing that for the implementation of Article VII national preparedness contributes to international capabilities, States Parties further agreed on the value, at the national level, of:

a. Strong detection capabilities, including for disease detections and surveillance;

b. Accurate disease mapping, including contact-tracing, social mobilisation capacities, and case investigation;
c. Appropriate command, control and coordination functions, including at a district level;
d. Mechanisms to manage offers of assistance, and to mobilize and coordinate the provision of assistance to other countries; and
e. Addressing legal, regulatory, and logistical roadblocks that would prevent or delay the provision and distribution of medical countermeasures or the use of appropriately qualified foreign medical personnel.

Recalling discussions in 2014 about the importance of assisting other States Parties by, inter alia, enhancing relevant capabilities, strengthening human resources, and sharing appropriate and effective practices, States Parties further agreed on the value of collaborating to build relevant national capacity, including:

a. Sharing experiences, expertise, technology and resources to build capacity to protect against biological and toxin weapons, including:
b. New methods and novel diagnostic technologies and equipment for detection and quick response to a disease outbreak; and
c. Disease surveillance information and analysis, including data on vulnerable and high-risk populations;
d. Enhancing national capacity by supporting the implementation of the International Health Regulations core capacities and the Global Health Security Agenda action package targets;
e. Working with relevant international organizations to build national capacity, such as core capacities of public and animal health systems, or those to address toxins, as well as command, control and coordination arrangements; and
f. Avoiding duplicating existing efforts and capacity and taking into account the differences in national laws, regulations, and constitutional procedures.

When considering a mechanism for the provision of assistance relevant to Article VII, States Parties agreed on the value of:

a. Guidelines to aid a State Party in submitting a request for assistance, supplemented, upon request, by advice from the ISU;
b. Guidelines on the levels of response to be adopted, as depends on the nature of the disease, the geographical area where the outbreak occurred, the status of the public health system of the State and the potential of international effects;
c. A database containing information on, and an inventory of, the types of assistance that States Parties could provide, such an inventory should:
    i. Be separate from the existing assistance and cooperation database; and established by the ISU in the restricted access section of the website;
    ii. Not be linked with procedures for requesting investigation of alleged use;
    iii. Be easily searchable and accessible to States Parties and able to promptly examine demands in accordance with domestic procedures and/or specific offers for assistance;
    iv. Include agreed procedures for States Parties to seek assistance;
    v. Include offers of assistance made by States Parties, individually or together with other States Parties, as well as relevant international organizations, such as for material, equipment, advice, technology and finance; and
    vi. Include information such as contact points within States Parties and relevant international organizations.
d. A data bank containing publicly available information on means of protection against, and responses to, biological and toxin weapons;
e. Procedures, or code of conduct, for the provision, without restrictions, of means of protection against, and responses to, the use of biological and toxin weapons to the requesting State Party, including consideration of what assistance can be requested and in what volumes, who will coordinate the provision of assistance, how it will be sent and how duplication will be avoided, including with assistance being provided by other international organizations;
f. A fund for assistance to affected States Parties; and
g. Capacity-building for international regional and sub-regional organizations that have relevant mandates, such as by joint exercises, workshops and training, including by the use of e-learning modules.

When considering a mechanism for the provision of assistance relevant to Article VII, States Parties further noted the value of considering:

a. How humanitarian efforts and assistance efforts under Article VII would be coordinated with an investigation into an allegation of use under Article VI of the Convention;
b. What the role of the ISU would be within this mechanism, and what additional resources would be required to enable it to fulfil this role; and
c. The potential for the UN Secretary-General's Mechanism to be called upon in the event of an international disease outbreak.

As regards the provision of assistance under Article VII and recalling the provisions set out in the Convention, States Parties reaffirmed that:

a. Article VII only applies when there has been a violation of the Convention, and is not concerned with natural outbreaks or other biosafety incidents that are not covered under the framework of the Convention; and
b. The provision of assistance under Article VII should not be conditional on the action or findings of the UN Security Council with respect to the investigation of alleged use, and should be provided promptly on the basis of the request by the affected state.

When requesting assistance under Article VII of the Convention:

a. A State Party should provide the following information:
    i. Name of the State Party;
    ii. National Point of Contact of the State Party;
    iii. Date and place of first reported case, indication if there was a related event, a description of the event, to the extent possible, the date and time, when the alleged event(s) took place and/or became apparent to the requesting State Party and, if possible, the duration of the alleged event(s);
    iv. Severity of the event, number of cases and the number of fatalities, if any;
    v. Symptoms and signs – diagnosis if possible, information on the initial treatment and the preliminary results of the treatment of the disease;
    vi. A description of the area involved;
    vii. All available epidemiological information;
    viii. Actions taken to manage the outbreak;
    ix. International organizations already involved in providing assistance;
    x. States already involved in providing assistance;
    xi. Indications of why the outbreak is considered to be the result of a biological attack;
    xii. Characteristics of the agent involved, if available;
    xiii. Types and scope of assistance required;
    xiv. Indication of any investigations conducted or being conducted;
    xv. Contact details for coordination of assistance if different from National Point of Contact; and
    xvi. Licensing requirements for healthcare personnel and measures to address such requirements.
b. The application is to be submitted to the UN Secretary-General for forwarding to the UN Security Council as an urgent matter. It should simultaneously be submitted as an urgent matter to one of the Depositories or the ISU, who will share this with all States Parties and inform them of the use of the provisions of Article VII.