



Intervention by Sri Lanka

The Sixth Meeting of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), 11-22 August 2025, in Geneva

Measures on International Cooperation and Assistance (ICA), 12 August 2025

Mr Chair,

As this the first time that my delegation is taking the floor, Sri Lanka joins others in expressing sincere gratitude to you, Mr. Chair, for your leadership of this Working Group on strengthening the BWC, one of the cornerstones of the global disarmament architecture. Please be assured of the fullest support and cooperation of Sri Lanka for the success of the deliberations at this session.

I also take this opportunity to thank the Friends of Chair groups, members of the ISU for their comprehensive work carried out so far in an inclusive approach.

Sri Lanka welcomes the rolling text and recognizes the value of its proposals while being mindful of the related financial implications.

Article X of the BWC is crucial for the Convention's implementation because it promotes **international cooperation** and the **peaceful use of biological science**. The peaceful use of biological science and technology holds immense potential for human advancement, from disease prevention to food security.

With regard to the Section A of the rolling text, we recognize that the promoting bio-security education and capacity building is critical for all States, particularly for developing and least developed countries which are yet to acquire the necessary resources, technologies, equipment, knowledge and capacities to face bio-security risks and global health challenges.

Therefore, improving the proposed measures and synchronizing their implementation together with ICA mechanism in a pragmatic way while understanding the specific needs for developing countries and ensuring equal access to developing and least developed countries will be vital in strengthening the Convention and its effective and universal implementation.

Towards this end, it is also important to identify complementarities and synergies of the activities by other relevant international and regional organizations with focus on bio-safety and bio-security for necessary collaboration while being mindful of avoiding duplication of the initiatives.

We wish to continue our engagement in discussing the relevant sections of the rolling text.

Thank you.

Measures on Compliance and Verification, 18 August 2025

Mr. Chair

My delegation wishes to thank you for presenting the proposed text on 'Measures on Compliance and Verification' under section D of the rolling text.

Sri Lanka supports negotiating a legally binding verification mechanism.

Absence of a robust verification mechanism, could lead to disparities in national compliance practices and national implementation process.

Sri Lanka also emphasizes that the verification mechanism should be applied to all States without any discrimination.

Therefore, Sri Lanka underlines the urgency and importance of negotiating a legally binding verification regime.

Sri Lanka is annually submitting its Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and values the Transparency and Confidence Building Measures, which could be complementary to the future verification mechanism. However, Sri Lanka emphasizes that the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) should not substitute a robust legally binding verification mechanism under the BWC.

Thank you

Measures on National Implementation of the Convention, 20 August 2025

Mr. Chair,

First of all, my delegation would like to thank you for presenting the proposed measures for national implementation under section E of the rolling text and also to the Friends of Chair for their comprehensive work.

Sri Lanka also wishes to thank the ISU for all the efforts in encouraging and facilitating national implementation through workshops for national focal points, training, sponsorships, technical assistance, and creating e-CBM Platform etc.

Mr. Chair,

National implementation remains a cornerstone of the Convention in its real-world operation across different continents. Biological agents and toxins have no boundaries, and they affect all countries regardless of their capacities to respond. Therefore, Sri Lanka perceives national implementation as a priority, particularly for developing countries which are vulnerable to biological threats, accidents, risks and global health challenges. Translating the BWC commitments into effective domestic laws and regulations in developing and least developed countries directly strengthens their public health systems, and their preparedness to respond to public health emergencies.

While noting that the BWC has near-universal adherence and most member states are from the Global South, facilitating developing and least developed countries for robust national implementation warrants more attention and assistance through the work of this Convention according to its mandate.

In this direction, my delegation believes that para 32 to 36 should capture the exact obligation under Article IV of the Convention “to take necessary measures to prohibit and prevent the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition or retention of the agents, toxins, weapons, equipment” as specified in the Article IV. Further it is important to capture the obligation under Article X to correctly reflect the broader aspects of peaceful uses of biological agents and toxins and international cooperation and assistance.

My delegation supports the establishment of national focal points in para 33 which is currently in effect and also the providing necessary resources to ISU to support national implementation efforts in para 36.

Mr. Chair,

National implementation is a primary way that developing countries can uphold their commitments under the BWC. However, the developing and least developed countries are facing significant challenges in national implementation due to limited resources and lack of technical expertise.

In the current context, digitalization, collecting data, establishment of efficient laboratory networks, storage of data, linking with different national authorities and establishing legal frameworks are important and remain as challenges to most of the developing states. Therefore, supporting the national implementation of the BWC by the ISU mentioned in para 36 should also capture diversified and concrete methods to assist States while understanding the challenges of the developing countries.

Let me also highlight a few ongoing initiatives by Sri Lanka in its national implementation to understand the importance of collaboration between developed and developing countries as well as with the ISU.

The National Inventory of Dangerous Pathogens (NIDP) which is a key step of national implementation in Sri Lanka was developed in 2022 with the technical and consultancy support extended by UNODA and the National Institute for Public Health and Environment (RIVM) of the Netherlands and with financial support of the European Union (EU). Plans are underway to expand the National Inventory of Dangerous Pathogens (NIDP) into laboratories across all sectors and across the island.

As part of strengthening the domestic legal framework, the National Policy on Biosafety and Biosecurity has been finalized and awaiting approval by the Cabinet of Ministers. The Disaster Preparedness and Response Unit of the Ministry of Health in Sri Lanka has also proposed to establish a National Secretariat for BWC in the future.

Mr. Chair,

It is obvious that Cooperation and Assistance with the UN and other International Organizations and Member States significantly enhance the process of national implementation of the BWC, particularly in developing countries. Therefore, we encourage strengthening networks and partnerships with developing and least developed countries to realize the objectives of the Convention at regional levels which could ultimately contribute to the universal implementation of the Convention.

My delegation also believes that establishment of the International Cooperation and Assistance (ICA) mechanism and Science and Technology (S & T) Review Mechanism are vital to strengthen national implementation efforts under the Convention.

Thank you.

Measures on Science and Technological development related to the Convention,
21 August 2025

Mr. Chair

Sri Lanka wishes to share a few general comments on the measures on science and technological development related to the Convention based on the text that you have shared with us today.

- I. Sri Lanka supports the fact that the members of the Science and Technology Reporting Committee are serving in their **individual capacity** and the Committee considers **gender and geographical balance**. We believe that the Committee should operate in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner in a balanced

approach. It is also important to ensure the sustainability of the operation of the Committee.

- II. In this direction, necessary flexibility may be required in striking the balance between numbers against balancing several criteria like geographical distribution, gender, level of expertise and qualification etc.
- III. Sri Lanka believes that **a clear pre-defined selection criteria** for experts is required to **avoid any conflict of interest** and the experts should be free from influence of the nominating government.
- IV. As my delegation also highlighted before, Sri Lanka is of the view that **the voice of the developing countries needs to be heard adequately by the Committee** even if these countries are not in a position to nominate experts in the relevant fields.
- V. Given the rapid development in science and technology, we perceive the importance of nominating experts from **diversified fields in a multidisciplinary approach**.

Thank you