
Geneva, 19 November -7 December 2001

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENT ON COMPLIANCE BY STATES PARTIES
WITH ALL THEIR OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE CONVENTION ON
THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION AND
STOCKPILING OF BACTERIOLOGICAL (BIOLOGICAL) AND
TOXIN WEAPONS AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION**

Prepared by the secretariat

Addendum

1. In paragraph 22 of its report (BWC/CONF.V/PC/1), the Preparatory Committee for the Fifth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction decided to request the secretariat to compile a background document on compliance by States parties with all their obligations under the Convention. The Preparatory Committee, furthermore, decided that for the purpose of preparing this document, the secretariat would request States parties to provide information regarding compliance with all the provisions of the Convention.
2. The present document contains the information provided by States parties to the secretariat, as of 27 November 2001, pursuant to paragraph 22 of the report of the Preparatory Committee.

Cuba

Biosafety-related activities in Cuba date back to 1984 and became institutionalized in 1993, being placed on a firm organizational footing in 1996 with the establishment, by ministerial resolution 67/96, of the National Biosafety Centre (CNSB) under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, the central Government body responsible, under Environment Act No. 81, for promoting and applying the Cuban State policy in the area of biosafety.

In 1996, by resolution 67/96 of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, the National Biosafety Centre (CNSB) was created with the aim of organizing, directing, implementing, supervising and controlling the national biosafety system, and organizing, directing and controlling measures undertaken in fulfilment of Cuba's obligations as a party to relevant international legal instruments, including the Biological Weapons Convention.

In its capacity as a regulatory body, CNSB works on the development of legal instruments and technical standards necessary for the implementation and strengthening of biosafety measures in Cuba. The Centre has designed a national biosafety strategy, which has enabled it to achieve, among others, the following goals:

- Establishing procedures for the assessment and issuing of licences for activities involving a high biological risk, covered by chapter VI, article 13, of decree law No. 190;
- Drawing a national inventory of facilities and areas where there are releases into the environment, including a specification of the biological agents handled in such facilities;
- Conducting on-site inspections of biological safety and introducing this aspect in all other supervisory activities;
- Developing a capacity-building process through the conduct of courses, skills development and other measures;
- Setting up technical committees on food products of a biotechnological origin and establishing technical biosafety standards;
- Drawing up and implementing training and capacity-building plans for specialists in this area;
- Developing contingency plans and emergency procedures;
- Conducting national biosafety workshops;
- Complying with the commitments on biosafety or biosafety related commitments in relevant international instruments to which Cuba is a party, including:
 - Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, signed in 1972 and ratified in 1976;
 - Convention on Biological Diversity, signed in 1992 and ratified in 1994;
 - Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, signed in May 2000 and currently being ratified.

Within the framework of the Biological Weapons Convention, Cuba has been participating since 1992 in information exchange, through the annual submission of forms on confidence-building measures. The following institutions have been involved:

- Civil Defence Scientific Research Centre;
- Institute of Veterinary Medicine;
- Central Quarantine Laboratory of the National Phytosanitary Centre;
- Pedro Kouri Tropical Medicine Institute;
- National Environmental Health Unit of the Ministry of Public Health;
- Finlay Institute, research centre and centre for serum and vaccine production;
- Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology Centre;
- National Scientific Research Centre (CENIC);
- Faculty of Biology of Havana University;
- National Biological Preparations Centre (BIOCEN);
- National Centre for Plant Protection and Animal Health (CENSA);
- Laboratory for Biological Pharmaceutical Products (LABIOFAM);
- National Centre for the Production of Laboratory Animals (CENPALAB).

In the area of national regulatory legislation, on 28 January 1999, decree-law No. 190 on biological safety was adopted, as the basis for a national legal system. This law forms part of the legislation supplementary to Environment Act No. 21 and entered into force on 15 February 1999. The decree-law sets out the general principles regulating the use of biological agents and genetically modified organisms in the territory of the country, releases into the environment of biological agents, organisms and fragments thereof containing genetic information and activities designed to ensure compliance with the international commitments entered into by Cuba in the area of biosafety.

The legislative pyramid, the apex of which is formed by decree-law No. 190, also includes the following statutes:

- Resolution No. 42/99, bringing into effect the classification into risk groups of biological agents and toxins affecting human, animal and plant health;
- Resolution No. 8/2000, bringing into effect the general biosafety regulations, for facilities handling biological agents and their products, organisms and fragments thereof containing genetic information;
- Resolution No. 76/2000, regulating procedures for the granting of biosafety authorizations.

In addition, the following regulatory instruments are currently being prepared:

- Regulation on the design, safety teams and appropriate practices for the use in facilities of biological agents and their products, organisms and fragments thereof containing genetic information;
- State biosafety environmental inspection regulation No. 3.2.

In the near future, work will also commence on the preparation of a regulation on the accounting and control of biological agents, teams, materials and technology.

In 1991, the Third Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention stressed the importance of confidence-building measures and requested States parties to submit the required information annually to the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, using the prescribed forms, so as to avoid any ambiguities. Cuba has submitted the required information annually on the prescribed declaration forms in a systematic manner.

For that purpose, at the national level, a group of centres has been identified, in accordance with their characteristics and the activities which they conduct, which are to participate systematically in the exchange of data for the declaration forms on confidence-building measures. A national biological technical group has been set up, comprising specialists from these centres.

Every year, since 1992, Cuba has submitted the following information in its declaration forms on confidence-building measures:

- (1) Exchange of data on research centres and laboratories: Cuba has provided the names of facilities, their location, funding, number of BL3 units, their area in square metres, the scope and general description of the activities which they conduct and the types of micro-organism and toxins which they handle;
- (2) Declaration of national biological defence research and development programmes: Cuba has no biological defence programme and therefore has nothing to declare in this form;
- (3) Information on outbreaks of infectious diseases: Under this measure, we have annually declared outbreaks of infectious diseases, the number of human, animal and plant cases per year. The information provided is consistent with the reports provided by the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Agriculture to specialized international agencies.

As for diseases affecting humans, we have declared cases of viral hepatitis, acute diarrhoeal diseases, food poisoning, typhoid fever, leptospirosis and brucellosis, among others.

With regard to animal diseases, we have declared cases of screwworm, bovine brucellosis and varroa among others.

As for plant diseases, information has been provided on *Toxoptera citricida*, *Phyllocnistis citrella*, the Citrus tristeza virus, *Thrips palmi*, *Steneotarsonemus spinki*, *Diaphorina citri* and *Hypothenemus hampei*;

(4) Information on outbreaks of infectious diseases and similar occurrences, that appear to deviate from the normal pattern: The confidence-building measures declaration form for 1997 provided information on the appearance in Cuba of *Thrips palmi*, an exotic agent unknown in Cuba prior to that time.

The confidence-building measures declaration form for 1998 provided information that, since September 1997, the first symptoms had been observed of the withering of rice plants, and suggested that the possible agents causing the withering was a mite of the family Tarsonemidae.

The 1999 confidence-building measures declaration form reported, under plant health, that during inspections of vegetable gardens, in January 1999, outbreaks of plant withering had been detected and suggested that the agent possibly responsible for the outbreaks was an insect of the order Homoptera, family Psyllidae, belonging to the species *Diaphorina citri*;

(5) Encouragement of publications of results and promotion of use of knowledge: Information has been provided on relevant publications by each of the institutions in the country which have to provide declarations and references have been provided to the journals in which papers by specialists from these centres have been published;

(6) Active promotion of contacts: Information has been provided on conferences, seminars, symposiums and other national and international events relevant to the Convention and on other opportunities for scientific exchange;

(7) Declaration of legislation, regulations and other measures: In the 1997 confidence-building measures declaration form, information was provided on resolution 67/96 of 7 October 1996, of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, setting up the National Biosafety Centre. The 1999 confidence-building measures declaration form submitted by Cuba provides information on the adoption of decree-law No. 190 on biological safety and explains its content;

(8) Declaration of past activities in offensive and defensive biological research and development programmes: No such programmes are conducted in Cuba and we have therefore reported that there is nothing to declare;

(9) Declaration of vaccine-production facilities: Information has been provided on the name and locality of these facilities and the types of vaccines produced in each of them.
