

# Youth Recommendations for the Ninth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention

Side event – Wednesday 30 November 09h00-10h00 CET  
Palais des Nations, Geneva – Building E – Room XXIV

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## 1. BACKGROUND AND GENERAL INFORMATION

### I. Background and description

In parallel with the 2018-2020 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) intersessional period (ISP), several youth-led groups have come together as a coordinated network of initiatives involving youth on responsible life science and innovation. Increased coordination has led to more frequent collaboration on their respective education initiatives and among their networks to bolster youth capacities in global biosecurity. In addition, the partnering entities have engaged in joint activities in the margins of BWC official meetings ([2020 Meetings of Experts](#) and [2020 Meeting of States Parties](#), both held in 2021) with the objective to showcase innovative ideas by youth to strengthen the BWC and the potential of their expertise for finding solutions to current biosecurity policy issues.

The Youth for Biosecurity Network share a vision that the next generation of biosecurity professionals needs to be engaged in discussions related to emerging technologies in the life sciences. The partners also believe that the potential of youth expertise should be harnessed by BWC policymakers.

The [Youth Declaration for Biosecurity](#), released in the margins of the 2020 Meeting of States Parties (November 2021), comes as a product of those joint endeavours to bring early career experts voices to the multilateral biosecurity diplomacy scene. This collectively adopted call-to-actions contains a set of recommendations to mitigate the threat of biological weapons through active and transformative youth engagement.

In this context, the Ninth BWC Review Conference provides an opportunity to continue and intensify efforts toward youth meaningful participation in multilateral disarmament and Non-Proliferation discussions under the BWC. To that end, the partner entities invite their respective youth delegations to the Review Conference to collectively formulate actionable recommendations for BWC States Parties to strengthen the global biosecurity regime. Using the existing recommended actions of the *Youth Declaration for Biosecurity*, the process to develop and present the youth recommendations has been composed of the following steps.

- ❖ **Three virtual preparatory sessions**
- ❖ **In-person workshop during the Review Conference**
- ❖ **Side-event]**

## II. Objectives

- Include the next generation's voices and recommendations in the only BWC decision-making body with a mandate to strengthen the international biosecurity regime
- Showcase initiatives for and/or by youth and early career experts carried out during the intersessional period 2018-2020 and present a unified network of organizations engaging youth in BWC
- Raise awareness within the multilateral BWC community on youth's important potential to positively impact discussions on current global biosecurity challenges.

## III. Expected Outcomes

- The major youth networks engaged in responsible science and innovation related to the BWC have collectively formulated actionable policy recommendations related to policy proposals to be discussed by States Parties at the Review Conference.
- Review Conference office holders and BWC States Parties' awareness of youth insights on current biosecurity challenges have increased.
- Youth and early career experts' recommendations are considered by BWC policymakers during the Review Conference and for a potential future Intersessional Work Programme.

## IV. Organizers and participants

This initiative is co-organized by seven entities:

- Nuclear Threat Initiative Global Biological Policy and Programs Team (NTI | bio)
- United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)
- International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA)
- International Genetically Engineered Machine (iGEM)
- Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security (CHS)
- The Next Generation Global Health Security Network (NextGen)
- Open Philanthropy

Participants should include representatives from the above-mentioned entities as well as their respective delegations of early career experts participating in the Review Conference.