

Seventh Session of the Working Group on Strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)

Side Event

Almaty Call for Action 2025: Driving Global Partnership in Strengthening Biosafety and Biosecurity

*Enhancing Safer Science and Biosecurity Through Regional Leadership
in Central Asia and the Caucasus – and Building Bridges Beyond*

**Palais des Nations, Room TEMPUS, Geneva, Switzerland
Monday, 8 December 2025, 13:15-14:45**

Organizer: International Science and Technology Center (ISTC)

For over three decades, the ISTC has played a pivotal role in advancing safer science, strengthening biosecurity, and promoting responsible research and innovation (R&I) across Central Asia, the Caucasus, and beyond. By cultivating trusted networks among scientists, research institutions, and national authorities, ISTC has helped build sustainable research capacity, modernize biosafety and biosecurity systems, and promote adherence to international norms.

Through targeted support to research, legal and regulatory development, laboratory workforce training, and risk-mitigation systems, ISTC has enabled countries in the region to enhance preparedness and contribute to global biological security. These regional experiences present practical and scalable models to support global efforts under the BWC.

In 2025, ISTC co-organized the high-level International Conference “The Future of Biosafety and Biosecurity” (14-16 October 2025, Almaty, Kazakhstan), bringing together more than 150 experts from over 20 countries. Held in partnership with BACAC and supported by GIZ, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the conference explored emerging challenges and opportunities at the intersection of science, technology, and global security. Key thematic areas included:

- Artificial intelligence in biotechnology and biorisk management
- Synthetic biology, mirror life, and evolving risk landscapes
- Democratization and governance of biotechnology
- Climate change and disease surveillance
- Combating disinformation in biosecurity
- Ethics and education in responsible science
- Data governance and trust-building in science and security

The conference marked two major milestones:

- (1) the 50th anniversary of the BWC, and
- (2) the 10th anniversary of ISTC’s presence in Kazakhstan.

A major outcome of the event is the forthcoming “Almaty Call for Action 2025”—a strategic roadmap to strengthen global collaboration, cross-regional partnerships, and sustained investment in biosafety and biosecurity capacities.

The BWC Working Group offers an ideal venue for presenting the Almaty Call for Action publicly for the first time, initiating dialogue with States Parties and partners, and exploring opportunities for investment, scaling good practices, and enhancing global biological risk management through collaborative action.

Scientific Secretaries:

Mr. Aidar TAINOV (moderator)
ISTC

Ms. Dana Yessenzhanova
ISTC

Event Program

Welcoming Remarks

Mr. Aibolat ABITBEKOV
Deputy Executive Director
ISTC

Speakers:

Ms. Katharina NIEDERHUT (online)
Head of Programme
German Biosecurity Programme
GIZ, Germany

Mr. Ashot DAVIDYANTS
President
Biosafety Association for Central Asia and
the Caucasus (BACAC), Armenia

Ms. Zauresh ZHUMADILOVA
General Director
National Scientific Center for Especially
Dangerous Infections, Kazakhstan

Mr. Hendrik VISSER
Senior Program Manager,
ISTC

Roundtable Discussion

All Speakers

Refreshments

Light refreshments will be served