

SUMMARY REPORT

REGIONAL TRAINING COURSES FOR NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS FOR THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

May 2023 – April 2024



**United Nations Office
for Disarmament Affairs**

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I. Introduction

Based on requests for support from National Contact Points (NCPs) relevant to their critical roles in fulfilling their States' obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) designed a Training Course as a dedicated capacity-building initiative for NCPs.

The Training Course was delivered through a series of six regional in-person workshops carried out between May 2023 and April 2024 by UNODA. Funding for the Training Course and the regional workshops was provided by the European Union under Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/2072 in support of building resilience in biosafety and biosecurity through the Biological Weapons Convention.

The Training Course was open to all national representatives or entities serving as BWC NCPs, as appointed by their respective national authorities or who could potentially assume such responsibility, including representatives of those State Parties that had yet to appoint an NCP. It benefited 151 NCPs (63 women and 88 men) and delegates from 106 States Parties and one State not yet Party.

This report provides a summary of the activities carried out in the context of the Training Course and its outcomes.



II. Background

The Sixth BWC Review Conference, held in 2006, encouraged States Parties to designate a national focal point, also referred to as a “national contact point”.¹ This has been reaffirmed by subsequent Review Conferences.²

The tasks and functions that were identified for NCPs by the Review Conferences include:

- (a) coordinating national implementation of the Convention and communicating with other States Parties and relevant international organizations;
- (b) coordinating and preparing the submission of confidence-building measures (CBMs);³
- (c) facilitating information exchange on universalization efforts;
- (d) providing at least biannually information on implementation of Article X to the BWC Implementation Support Unit (BWC ISU).

More broadly, NCPs are often also tasked to coordinate, promote and ensure adoption of implementing measures, and to oversee BWC national implementation generally.

States Parties have taken differing approaches to the establishment and placement of their designated NCP. The NCPs are therefore embedded in different entities at the domestic level, are entrusted with different tasks and authority, have diverse backgrounds and varying levels of prior knowledge of and experience in the implementation of the BWC.

The Sixth Review Conference also requested States Parties to inform the ISU of the details of their respective NCPs. By December 2022, when the Training Course was being conceived, only 134 out of 184 States Parties had nominated an NCP and informed the ISU. Despite their critical role for the effective implementation of the

¹ See BWC/CONF.VI/6, Final Document of the Sixth Review Conference (2006), Part II, Article IV, paragraph 18.

² See BWC/CONF.VIII/4, Final Document of the Eighth Review Conference (2016), Part II, Article IV, paragraph 15; and BWC/CONF.VII/7, Final Document of the Seventh Review Conference (2011), Part II, Article IV, paragraph 15.

³ At the Second Review Conference in 1986, States Parties agreed that they should annually submit Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) to prevent or reduce the occurrence of ambiguities, doubts and suspicions and to improve international cooperation. The precise modalities for the information exchange were agreed by an expert meeting in 1987. Subsequent Review Conferences have urged and called upon all States Parties to annually submit CBMs, as have relevant annual resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

The CBMs provide an opportunity for States Parties to demonstrate commitment to fulfilling their BWC obligations by providing relevant data. They have to be returned no later than 15 April each year and are based on agreed forms providing information on: research centres and laboratories meeting very high national or international safety standards; biodefence research and development programmes; infectious disease outbreaks, and similar occurrences caused by toxins, that may be of interest in the BWC context; publication policies related to scientific activities relevant to the BWC; national legislative and other measures to implement BWC obligations; past offensive and defensive biological research and development activities; and vaccine production facilities. Further information on CBMs can be found in the Guide to Participating in the Confidence-Building Measures of the Biological Weapons Convention at <https://www.un.org/disarmament/publications/more/cbm-guide/>, as well as on the UNODA website at <https://www.un.org/disarmament/biological-weapons/confidence-building-measures/>. The eCBM facility, which serves as the repository for all the CBMs submitted and enables the online generation and submission of the annual CBM reports, is accessible at <https://bwc-cbm.un.org>.

BWC, there was no dedicated training made available to all NCPs to enhance their capacities in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elaboration and provision of the Training Course therefore addressed a critical gap in the assistance available to States Parties and responded to requests being received from NCPs.

Building on the [Guide to Implementing the BWC](#) (NIM Guide) published by UNODA in 2022 with the support of the European Union and Norway,⁴ and taking into account prior capacity building activities conducted by the BWC ISU, UNODA recruited a consultant to design and develop the a standardized Training Course for NCPs. As mentioned, it was delivered through a series of six workshops tailored to different regions.

III. Objectives of the Training Course

The objectives of the Training Course were to:

- Explain the roles and responsibilities of NCPs;
- Provide training on aspects of national implementation, including sharing knowledge and best practices in developing legislation and national action plans, with a particular focus on the preparation and submission of CBMs;
- Serve as a platform for information exchange and foster a sense of empowerment and community among NCPs;
- Familiarize participants with UNODA initiatives in support of BWC national implementation, including with regard to the preparation and submission of CBM reports; and
- Encourage States Parties that had yet to nominate an NCP to do so and provide them with relevant information for and useful tools on the nomination process.

IV. Methodology

The Training Course was delivered in person through six two-day regional workshops, conducted for States in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Central Asia and the Caucasus, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, Europe and others. Standardized training materials were developed in English and made available in French, Spanish, Arabic and Russian to be used in each regional workshop. Simultaneous interpretation was also provided.

Participants were technical-level State representatives appointed as NCPs – including newly appointed NCPs –, and delegates working on the BWC portfolio at

⁴ The Guide is available in all six UN official languages. Furthermore, in response to requests from Lusophone countries, the Guide is also available in Portuguese. The Guide is available at: <https://disarmament.unoda.org/guide-to-implementing-the-biological-weapons-convention/>.

the national level, mainly from the ministries of foreign affairs, ministries of defence, and ministries of health. Nomination of women as NCPs and women's participation was actively encouraged.

The Training Course provided detailed guidance pertaining to the roles and responsibilities of NCPs and practical information on all aspects of BWC national implementation, including challenges and best practices in developing legislation and action plans. Discussion sessions, as well as practical and interactive exercises were held to facilitate brainstorming around practical issues possibly arising for NCPs in the context of their functions. This approach aimed to contribute to promoting an active exchange of knowledge to move towards better implementation of the BWC at the national level, strengthening the NCP network, and amplifying progress in the respective regions.

On the first day of the Training Course, participants heard about the roles and responsibilities of NCPs and the general challenges countries may encounter when implementing the BWC. Additionally, they were informed about the broader state of play of the Convention, including current developments and topics discussed within the Working Group on the Strengthening of the BWC established by the Ninth Review Conference. Participants from each region shared national experiences, most notably on their respective institutional and legal frameworks. The second day centred around the preparation and submission of CBM reports, including a panel discussion based on national practices and a table-top exercise.

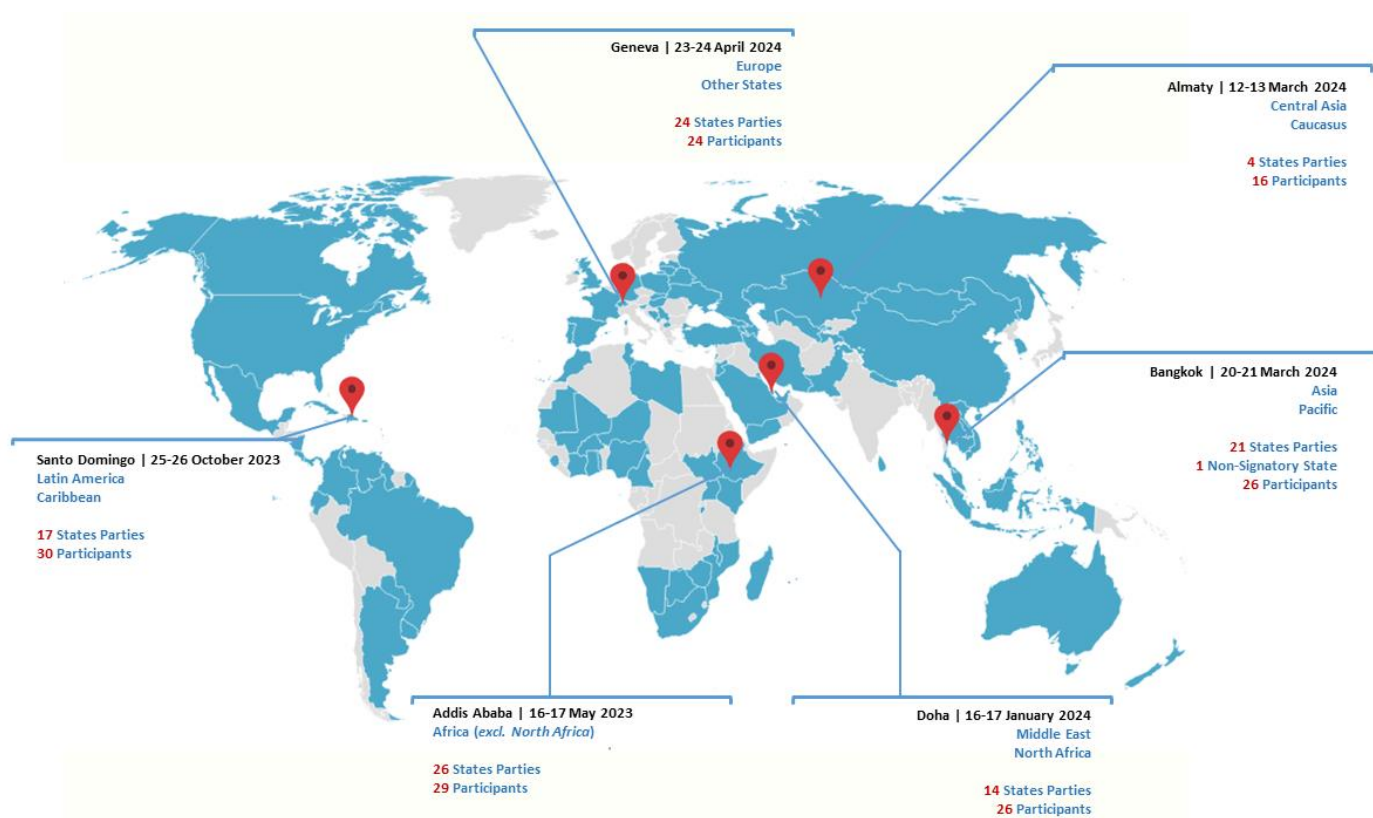
Prior to each Training Course, a questionnaire was circulated to the participants to identify priority topics per region, assistance needs and challenges they face in fulfilling their role as NCPs related to BWC national implementation as well as preparation and submission of CBMs. The participants' replies served as a basis for tailoring the sessions and modules to address the specific challenges and existing capacities in the respective regions.

Evaluation questionnaires were distributed at the end of each Training Course for participants to provide their feedback and recommendations.

V. Training Course: Regional in-person workshops



Diagram 1 – Map of participating States



The boundaries and designations used on this map are for illustration purposes only and do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

***Tuvalu deposited its instrument of accession to the BWC on June 28, 2024.*

“Regional Training Course for National Contact Points on the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention” for States Parties in Africa (16-17 May 2023)

In May 2023, 48 out of 54 countries in Africa were States Parties to the BWC. Of these, two African States (Namibia and South Sudan) had recently acceded to the Convention⁵; two African States had signed but not ratified the BWC (Egypt and Somalia), and four African States had neither signed nor ratified the BWC (Chad, Comoros, Djibouti and Eritrea). Forty-three States Parties in Africa were invited to attend this course.⁶

The [Regional Training Course for BWC NCPs in Africa](#) was held from 16 to 17 May 2023 at the UN Conference Centre (UNECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Twenty-nine participants from 26 African States Parties⁷ (six women and 23 men) attended the Regional Training Course. The Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, opened the Regional Training Course together with a representative from the EU delegation in Addis Ababa, and UNODA. The Director of the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), Mr. Anselme Nahmtante Yabouri, joined the opening session.

As of May 2023, 32 out of the 43 States Parties in Africa invited to the event had designated an NCP.

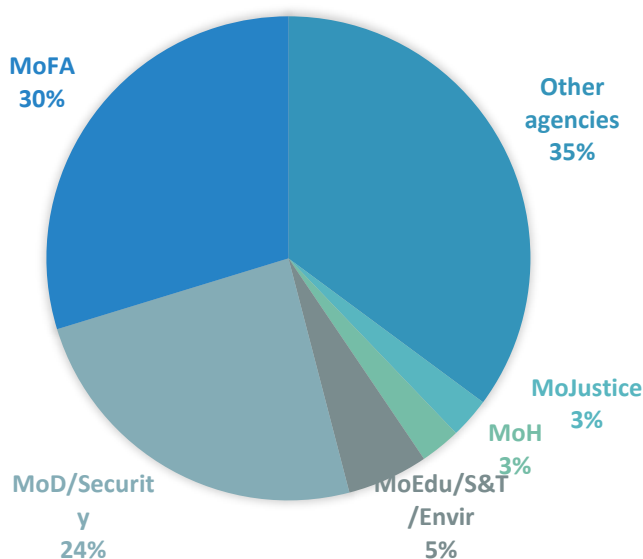


⁵ Namibia acceded on 25 February 2022 and South Sudan acceded on 15 February 2023.

⁶ Excluding States Parties in North Africa, which attended the Regional Training Course for BWC NCPs in the Middle East and North Africa (see below).

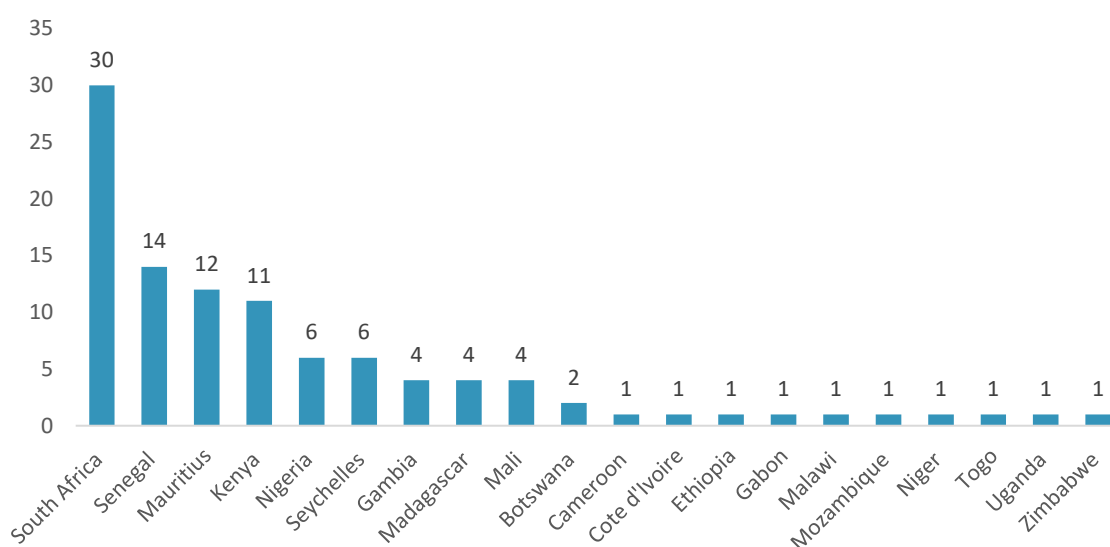
⁷ Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

Diagram 2 - NCP Designations in Africa as of May 2023: institutional affiliation⁸



The majority of the States Parties in Africa represented at the event had established their NCP in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence and in other agencies. Others had opted for the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health.

Diagram 3 – CBM Submissions by BWC States Parties in Africa (as of May 2023)



In May 2023, 20 States Parties in Africa represented at the event, had submitted at least one CBM report, with some of them having made multiple submissions over the years.

⁸ Excluding States Parties in North Africa, which are reflected in the statistics relating to the Regional Training Course for BWC NCPs in the Middle East and North Africa (see below).

In their feedback on the Regional Training Course, the participants highlighted the need for a multi-sectoral approach in the coordination of the activities of the NCPs. They also expressed appreciation for the table-top exercise as well as the importance of organizing more such exercises and suggested that national parliamentarians and NCPs from other regions also be involved in future similar activities.



“Regional Training Course for National Contact Points on the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention” for States Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean (25-26 October 2023)

As of October 2023, 32 out of 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean were States Parties to the BWC. Haiti has signed but not ratified the Convention.

The [Regional Training Course for BWC NCPs in Latin America and the Caribbean](#) was held from 25 to 26 October 2023 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. It was organized jointly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence of the Dominican Republic and in coordination with the UN Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC).

Sixteen participants (11 women and five men) from an equal number of States Parties in Latin American and the Caribbean⁹ attended the Regional Training Course, as well as 14 participants (six women and eight men) from different national authorities of the Dominican Republic.

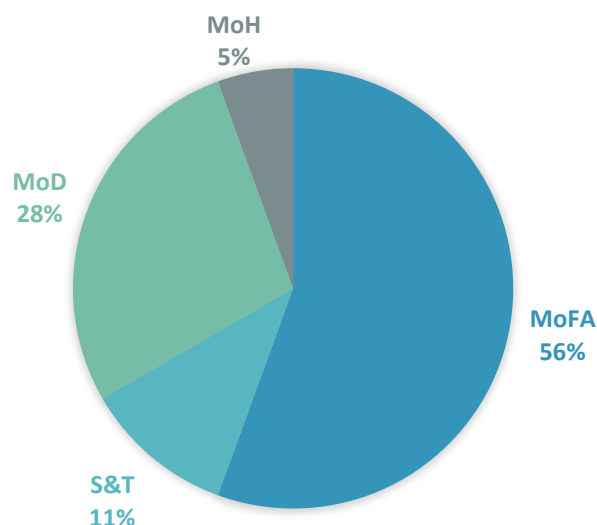
Along with UNODA, representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence and the EU Delegation in Santo Domingo opened the event. A representative from the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE) of the Organization of American States (OAS) and a representative from UNLIREC also participated in the Regional Training Course. The CICTE representative sensitized the participants about the synergies between the BWC and United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 particularly as regards the status of implementation of biosafety and biosecurity measures, while the UNLIREC representative focused on the [specific challenges and opportunities for the region](#).

As of October 2023, 19 out of 32 States Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean had designated an NCP.



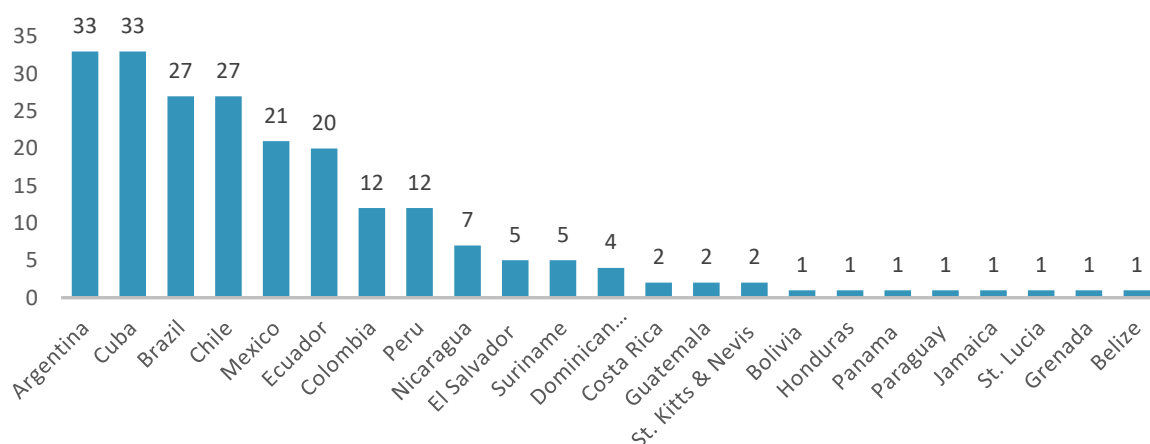
⁹ Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Diagram 4 - NCP Designations in the LAC region as of October 2023: institutional affiliation



The majority of the States Parties from this region had established their NCP in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or in the Ministry of Defence. Others had established their NCP in the Ministry of Science and Technology and in the Ministry of Health.

Diagram 5 – CBM Submissions by BWC States Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean (as of October 2023)



As of October 2023, 23 out of 32 States Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean had submitted at least one CBM report, with some of them having made multiple submissions over the years.

In their feedback on the Regional Training Course, the participants highlighted the importance of guidance, training and awareness raising among the NCPs and relevant national stakeholders in the context of the CBM submission process. They also stressed the need for effective inter-institutional coordination, the involvement of all relevant actors at national level, their empowerment in the preparation of CBM reports, and the exchange of information among them. The relevance of best practices from other countries, including from other regions, was also referred to in the context of ensuring the effective implementation of the BWC at national level.

Appreciation was also expressed for the table-top exercise, which allowed clarification of existing doubts regarding the requirements for the compilation and submission of CBM forms. It was also suggested that for future similar exercises, separate scenarios could be prepared for each breakout group to allow sharing of different perspectives on the CBM compilation process. It was also suggested that similar training courses be organized involving other national institutions.



“Regional Training Course for National Contact Points on the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention” for States Parties in the Middle East and North Africa (16-17 January 2024)

As of January 2024, all countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region were States Parties to the BWC, except for Egypt and Syria (Signatory States) and Israel (non-signatory State).

The [Regional Training Course for BWC NCPs in the Middle East and North Africa](#) was held from 16 to 17 January 2024 at the UN House in Doha, Qatar. It was organized by UNODA in cooperation with the National Committee for the Prohibition of Weapons (NCPW) of the Ministry of Defence of the State of Qatar. Along with UNODA, the Chairman of the NPCW and a representative from the EU Delegation in Doha opened the event.

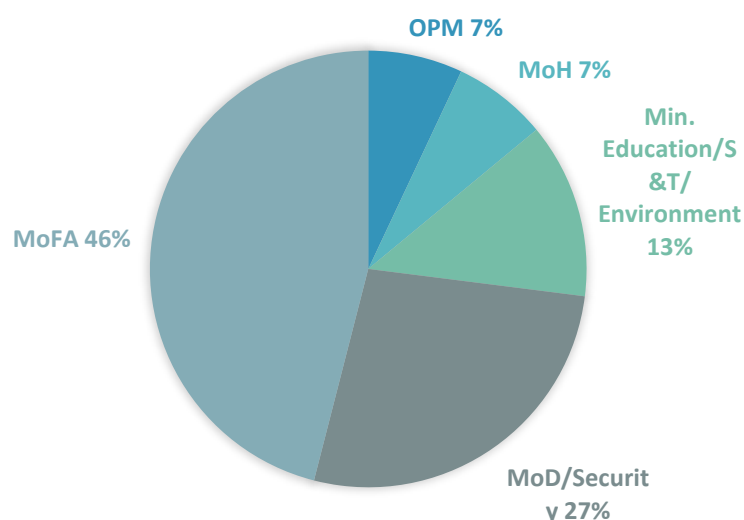
Fourteen participants (three women and 11 men) from 14 States Parties in the Middle East and North Africa attended the Regional Training Course.¹⁰ The State of Qatar was represented at the event by 12 participants (three women and nine men) from the NCPW of the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Interior, the Hamal Medical Corporation, the Qatar University and the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC).

As of January 2024, 16 out of 19 States Parties in the Middle East and North Africa, had designated an NCP.



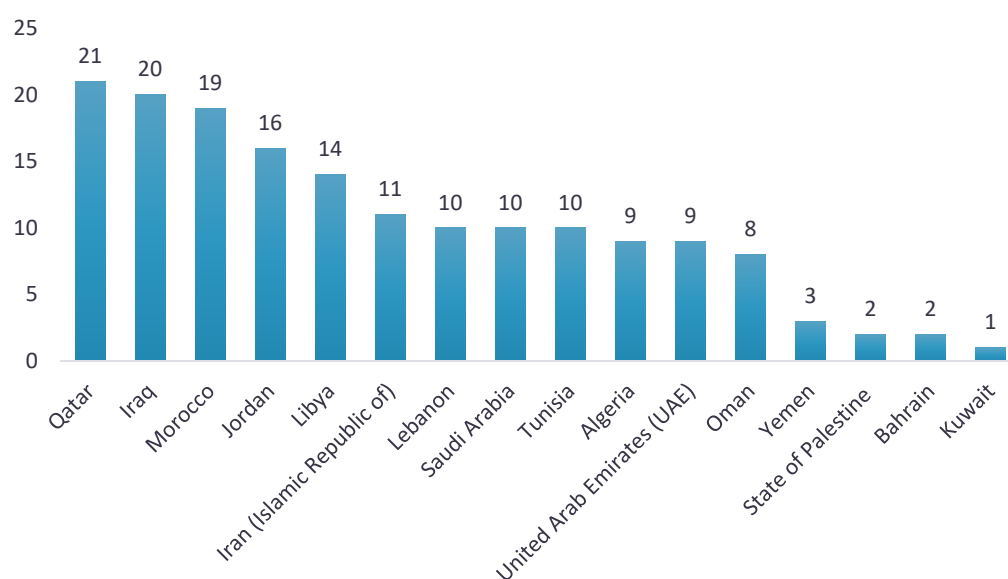
¹⁰ Bahrain, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, State of Palestine, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Diagram 6 - NCP Designations in the Middle East and North Africa as of January 2024: institutional affiliation



The majority of the States Parties represented at the event had established their NCP in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or in the Ministry of Defence. Others had established their NCP in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Ministry of the Environment or in the Ministry of Health. A minority had established their NCP in the Office of the Prime Minister.

Diagram 7 – CBM Submissions by BWC States Parties in the Middle East and North Africa (as of January 2024)



As of January 2024, 16 States Parties in this region had submitted at least one CBM report, with some of them having made multiple submissions over the years.

In their feedback on the Regional Training Course, the participants particularly valued the opportunity to get to know the practice of other countries in relation to the establishment and functioning of their respective NCPs, as well as in the preparation and submission of CBMs. They recommended that additional similar training opportunities should be considered to cover comprehensively different aspects of the BWC implementation.



"Regional Training Course for National Contact Points on the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention" for States Parties in Central Asia and the Caucasus region (12-13 March 2024)

As of March 2024, all countries from Central Asia and the Caucasus region were States Parties to the BWC.

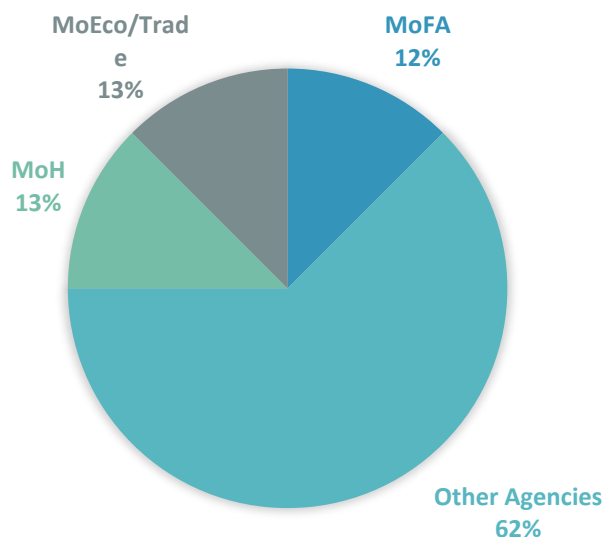
The [Regional Training Course for BWC NCPs in Central Asia and the Caucasus Region](#) was held from 12 to 13 March 2024 at the UN Building in Almaty, Kazakhstan. It was organized by UNODA in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan.

Sixteen participants (six women and 10 men) from four States Parties in Central Asia and the Caucasus region attended the Regional Training Course.¹¹ The Deputy Head of the Representative Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan in Almaty provided opening remarks, along with UNODA. On 12 March, a courtesy visit was organized by the Ministry of Health of Kazakhstan to the Central Reference Laboratory, which serves as the national diagnostic reference laboratory for certain diseases and operates BSL3 and BSL2 laboratories.



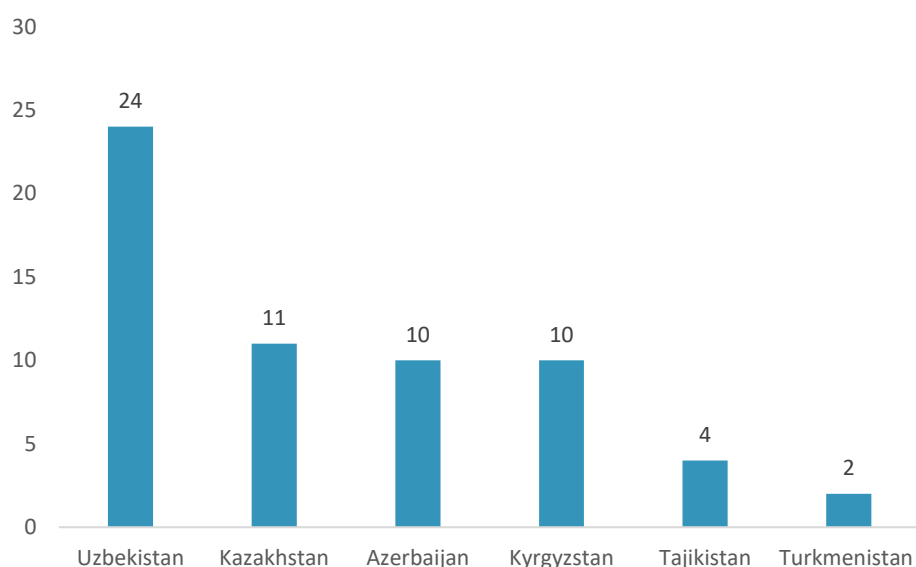
¹¹ Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

**Diagram 8 - NCP Designations in the Central Asia and Caucasus region
as of March 2024: institutional affiliation**



As of March 2024, five States out of the six BWC States Parties in this region had designated an NCP. Most of these States Parties have established a national authority. Others had established their NCP in the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Economy and Trade, Ministry of Mining and Geology, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**Diagram 9 – CBM Submissions by BWC States Parties in Central Asia and
Caucasus region (as of March 2024)**



As of March 2024, all participating BWC States Parties in this region had submitted at least one CBM report, with some of them having made multiple submissions over the years.

In their feedback on the Regional Training Course, all participants highlighted the relevance of enhancing inter-agency coordination, mapping of stakeholders and developing National Action Plans, and expressed the added value of the NCP restricted website and the eCBM platform.

They acknowledged the benefits of the Regional Training Course concerning the exchanges on regional challenges, best practices and lessons learned/outcomes from CBMs discussions.

Future training opportunities (including online training) and increased awareness at national and regional levels about BWC provisions, as well as regular practical exercises, were highlighted as important steps towards ensuring the effectiveness of the ban against biological weapons.



"Regional Training Course for National Contact Points on the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention" for States Parties in Asia and the Pacific (20-21 March 2024)

As of April 2024, all countries in Asia and the Pacific were States Parties to the BWC, except for Kiribati, Micronesia and Tuvalu (non-signatories).¹²

The [Regional Training Course for NCPs in Asia and the Pacific](#) was held from 20 to 21 March 2024, at the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok, Thailand.

Twenty-six participants (11 women and 15 men) from 21 States Parties and one non-signatory State in Asia and the Pacific attended the Regional Training Course.¹³ A representative from the EU Delegation in Bangkok opened the event, along with UNODA.

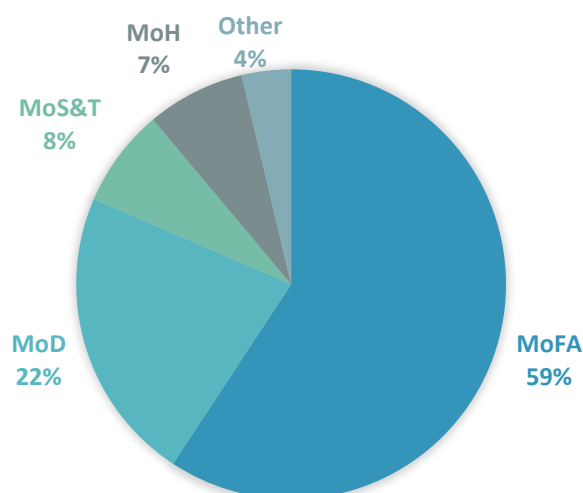
As of March 2024, 28 out of 37 States Parties in Asia and the Pacific had designated an NCP.



¹² At the event, the representative from Tuvalu conveyed the decision of the government of Tuvalu to accede to the BWC. Tuvalu deposited its instrument of accession to the BWC on June 28, 2024, followed by Micronesia which deposited its instrument of accession to the BWC on July 12, 2024.

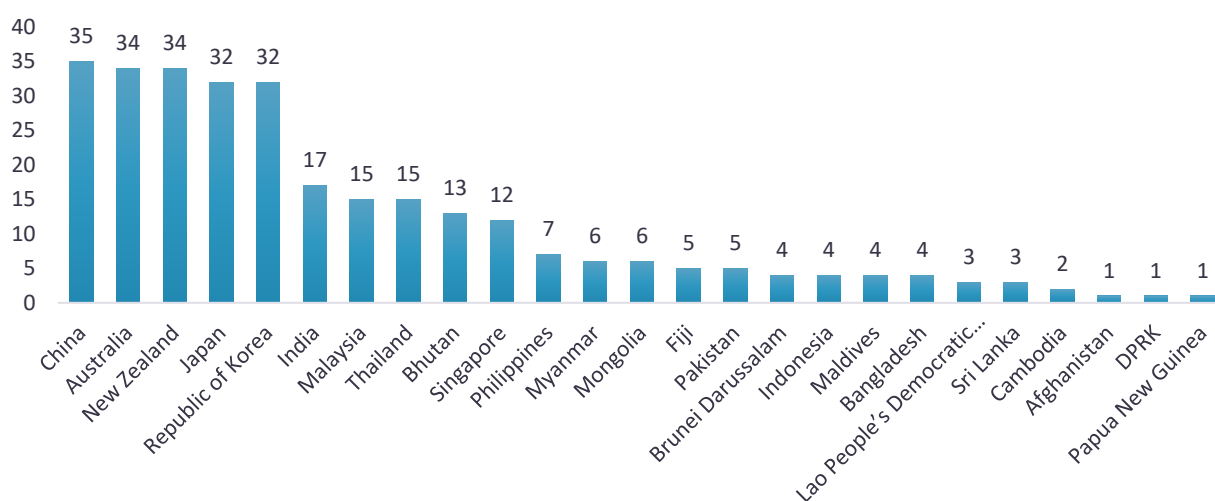
¹³ Australia, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Palau, Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam.

**Diagram 10 - NCP Designations in Asia and the Pacific as of March 2024:
institutional affiliation**



Most of the States Parties represented at the event had established their NCP in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or in the Ministry of Defence. Others had established their NCP in the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Ministry of Health or other ministries.

**Diagram 11 – CBM Submissions by BWC States Parties in Asia and the Pacific
(as of March 2024)**



As of March 2024, 25 States of the 37 States Parties in Asia and the Pacific had submitted at least one CBM report, with some of them having made multiple submissions over the years.

UNODA introduced and sensitized the participants about the [new eCBM platform](#), including new features and statistics. The participants welcomed the new platform and emphasised the relevance of CBMs as a key mechanism to promote transparency among States Parties.

In their feedback on the Regional Training Course, the participants stressed the importance of future training opportunities to increase awareness at regional and national levels about BWC provisions and assist in the understanding and preparation of CBM submissions. They also stressed the need for NCPs to meet regularly and share information, and expressed the hope that a yearly international meeting of NCPs could be organized. They further conveyed appreciation for the practical exercises during the event and getting apprised of common challenges shared by other NCPs in the region.



"Regional Training Course for National Contact Points on the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention" for States Parties in Europe and other States Parties (23-24 April 2024)

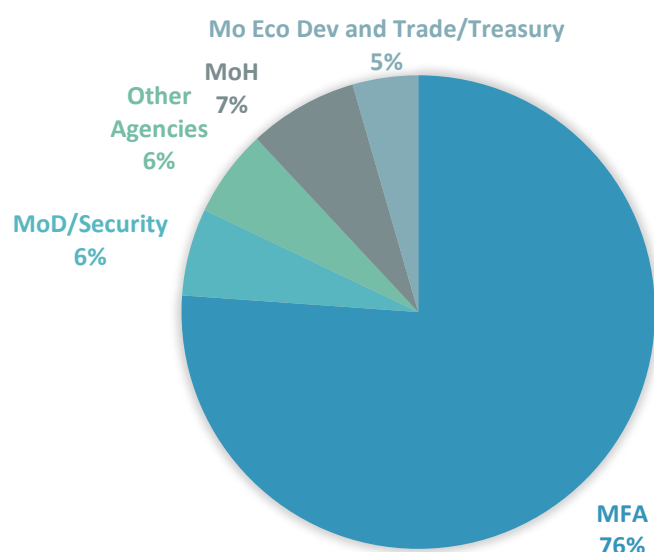
The [Regional Training Course for BWC States Parties in Europe and other States Parties](#) was held from 23 to 24 April 2024, at the Palais des Nations, in Geneva, Switzerland. A total of 48 States Parties were invited to this regional training course.

Twenty-four participants (17 women and 7 men) from 24 States Parties attended the Regional Training Course.¹⁴ A representative from the EU Delegation in Geneva opened the event, along with the Chief of the ISU. Ambassador Flavio Soares Damico of Brazil, Chairperson of the Working Group on the Strengthening of the BWC, briefed the participants on the status of the discussions within the Working Group.



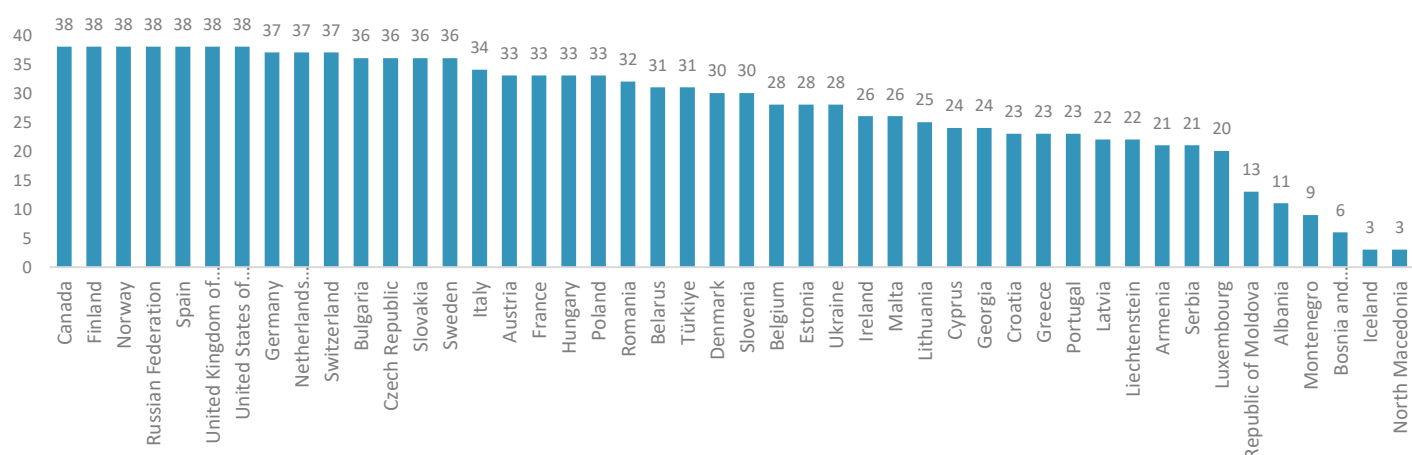
¹⁴ Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and United States of America.

**Diagram 12 - NCP Designations in SPs in Europe and other States as of April 2024:
institutional affiliation**



As of March 2024, 48 States Parties among those invited to the Regional Training Course had established an NCP.

**Diagram 13 – CBM Submissions by BWC States Parties in Europe and other States
(as of April 2024)**



Forty-six out of the 48 States Parties invited to the Regional Training Course had submitted at least one CBM report, with many of them having made multiple submissions over the years. Participants were also sensitized about the [new eCBM platform](#). The participants welcomed the new platform and the improvements regarding the CBM submissions process, as well as the availability of statistics.

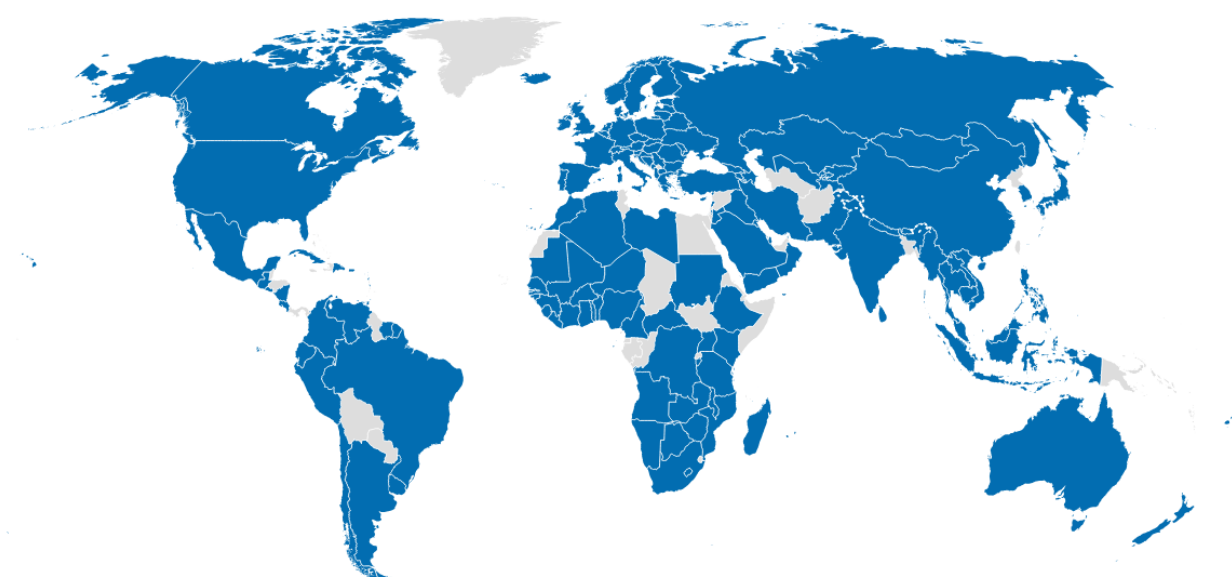
In their feedback on the Regional Training Course, participants stressed the importance of becoming aware of the different approaches to national implementation and the CBM process from other States Parties to learn best practices and opportunities for similar solutions that could work at national level. The table-top exercise and the other practical exercises during the event were appreciated, and the suggestion was made that a moot CBM submission on the eCBM platform could be useful for future similar training opportunities.



VI. Overall outcomes of the Training Course

As mentioned above, in December 2022, when the Training Course was being conceived, only 134 out of the then 184 States Parties had nominated an NCP and informed the ISU. As of May 2023, when the Training Course was launched in Addis Ababa, the number of States Parties had increased from 184 to 185 States Parties due to the accession of South Sudan. By April 2024, when the Training Course concluded, the total number of States Parties having designated an NCP had increased from 134 to 152.

Diagram 14 – States Parties having designated an NCP as of April 2024

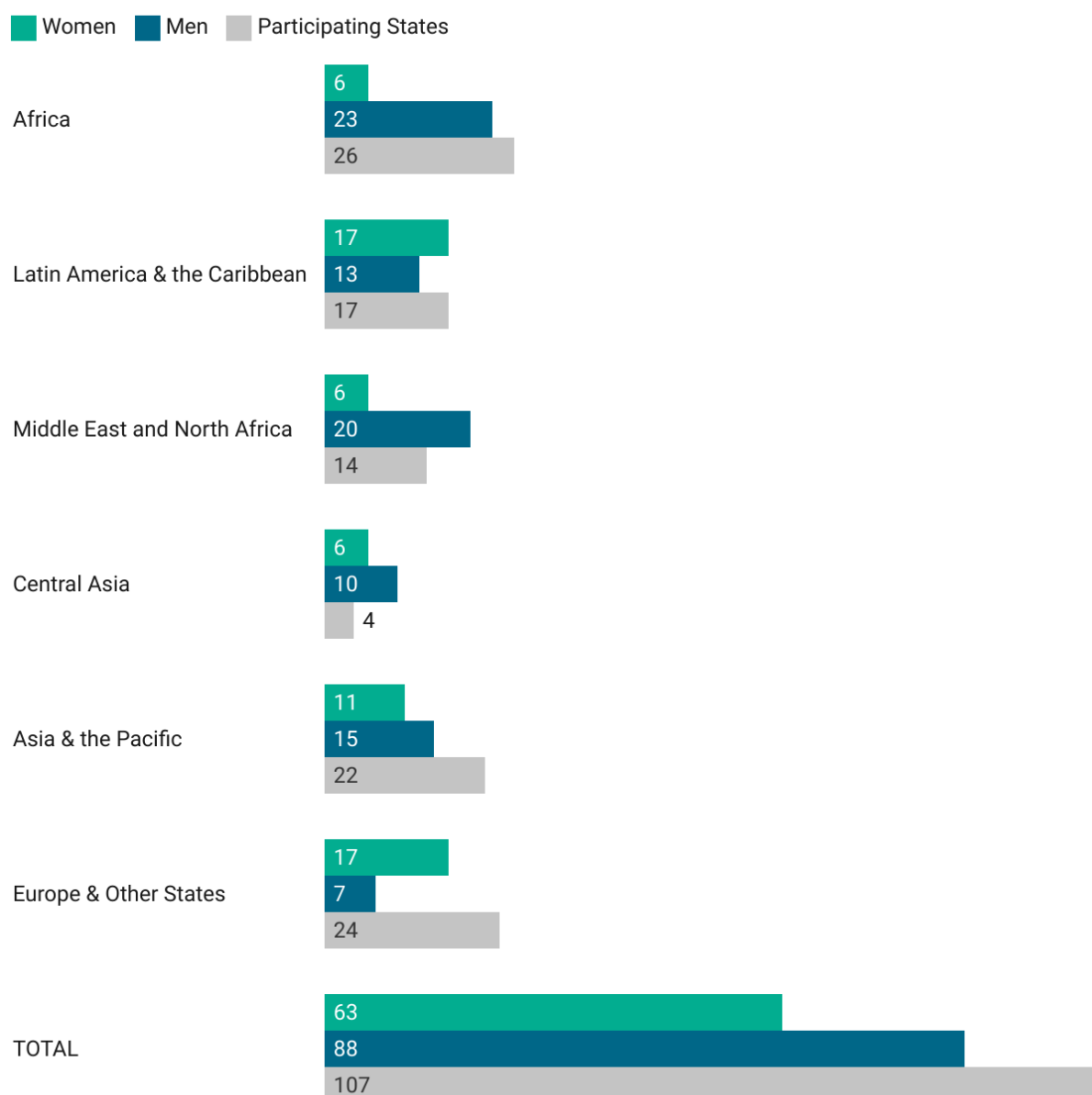


The boundaries and designations used on this map are for illustration purposes only and do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

While the ISU makes the contact details of all designated NCPs available to all States Parties, there had been no regular opportunities for the NCPs to interact with each other. The holding of a series of informal in-person regional dialogue fora for NCPs therefore provided a unique opportunity to facilitate information exchange and networking. It also helped foster a sense of empowerment and community among NCPs at the sub-regional and regional levels.

All States Parties were offered the opportunity to participate in the Training Course. Out of the 185 States Parties as of April 2024, 106 States Parties and one non-signatory State¹⁵, and 151 NCPs, benefited from the Training Course. Dedicated efforts are continuing to encourage countries to nominate NCPs and to sensitize them about the BWC.

¹⁵ Tuvalu deposited its instrument of accession on June 28, 2024, becoming the 186th State Party to the BWC.

Diagram 15 - Total participants by gender and number of participating States

The Training Course provided a platform for NCPs to share their national experiences, discuss common challenges, learn from each other and share best practices, thereby contributing to strengthening the global network of NCPs.

It also offered an opportunity to clarify and promote a better understanding of the role, responsibilities and relevance of NCPs, including related obligations under the BWC as well as opportunities for receiving international assistance.

National presentations and NCP panel sessions stimulated reactions and lively discussions among the participants on national experiences, challenges and best practices that could be adopted or replicated in other countries. Practical and table-

top exercises provided insights into the CBM preparation process and prompted discussions around real case scenarios.

It is expected that the Training Course will encourage remaining State Parties that have not yet nominated NCPs to proceed with their nominations, and additional contacts and interaction with existing NCPs and the ISU, including for the purposes of updating contact information, which is crucial for a smooth interaction between them.

Together with other targeted initiatives that are currently being undertaken by UNODA and the ISU, it is also expected that the Training Course will result in higher numbers and quality of annually submitted CBMs reports, which will provide additional information on the status of the implementation of the Convention globally.

The Training Course provided an opportunity for UNODA to sensitize participants about current developments within the Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention, introduce the [new eCBM platform](#) and highlight the synergies between the implementation of the BWC at the national level, and the reporting on BWC-related obligations in the context of other relevant regimes (such as UN Security Council resolution 1540).

VII. Common challenges

The participants identified and shared challenges in fulfilling their roles as NCPs, which appeared to be common to all participating States Parties, irrespective of the specific region or level of development in areas relevant to the BWC.

The key challenges that emerged in the context of the Training Course regarding the roles and functions of NCPs are as follows:

- a. Lack of clarity on the role and responsibilities of the NCPs and the related need for availability of training opportunities and capacity-building activities, which the participants conveyed the Training Course helped to address;
- b. Lack of understanding of the scope of the BWC among relevant stakeholders, and the need to achieve a better understanding of their importance for BWC implementation in order to secure their support and contribution;
- c. Lack of coordination with relevant national administrations and institutions, as well as with the private sector;
- d. Lack of outreach to industry, academia and the general public, including particularly youth;
- e. Lack of gap analyses of the current legal frameworks regarding BWC provisions and requirements, as well as of National Action Plans setting priorities and related actions, resources and responsibilities;

- f. Lack of visibility and contact with other NCPs in the regions;
- g. Lack of skilled human resources as well as financial resources; and
- h. Lack of materials/sources for newly appointed NCPs on legal and technical matters related to BWC implementation.

Regarding the preparation and submission of CBM forms in particular, the following key challenges were identified:

- i. Difficulties in the identification of relevant national stakeholders and the collection of accurate, up-to-date and reliable data;
- j. Difficulties with the compilation of the CBM forms, which include difficulties in understanding the requirements under the CBM forms;
- k. Difficulties in ensuring the validation of data gathered for CBMs submissions, and appropriate oversight mechanisms;
- l. Frequent turnover of personnel along with frequent changes of officers responsible for reporting information/data;
- m. Lack of response or late response from relevant stakeholders, and ensuing late submission of CBMs;
- n. Lack of buy-in from decision-makers, especially in cases when BWC implementations is not a priority;
- o. Difficulties when dealing with matters within the competence of other national stakeholders, including the question of requesting data that some of the stakeholders consider confidential or sensitive;
- p. Difficulties with identifying relevant laboratories operating in the State or under its jurisdiction or control; and
- q. Challenges with language when it comes to requesting information at the national/local level.

VIII. Best practices and recommendations

The following best practices and recommendations emerged in the context of the Training Course in terms of addressing, managing and/or resolving some of the above-mentioned challenges faced by NCPs in fulfilling their institutional roles, particularly as it concerns coordination and promoting the implementation of the BWC, and ensuring an effective and smooth annual CBM preparation and submission process:

- a. Ensure that an NCP is appointed in a national entity that by mandate and structure is relevant and endowed with the necessary authority to enable the NCP to carry out its functions effectively;

- b. Accordingly, once appointed, an NCP must be provided with resources to be able to fulfil its roles and responsibilities;
- c. Ensure increased multistakeholder engagement and inter-agency coordination as a crucial factor for both implementing the BWC more generally and for preparing CBM submissions;
- d. Engage in awareness raising about the BWC's scope and relevance among relevant stakeholders at the national level. Awareness-raising is also an enabler for data collection, coordination and CBM submission;
- e. Establish regular inter-agency coordination and information-exchange mechanisms, and establish good working relationship amongst them;
- f. To identify relevant stakeholders, States Parties should review each article of the BWC and link roles and responsibilities of their respective national authorities with specific obligations;
- g. To ensure that States Parties inform the ISU about their NCPs nominations, the ISU can facilitate access to the NCP restricted website for newly-appointed NCPs who attended the Training Course, ensure continued engagement with NCPs and follow up with States Parties bilaterally on upcoming activities relevant for them;
- h. The [NIM Guide](#) developed by UNODA serves a relevant tool in the context of ensuring BWC national implementation, which was welcomed by all participants;
- i. Participants also expressed their interest in learning from national experiences from regions other than their own.;
- j. As regards the preparation and submission of CBM forms in particular:
 - i. Develop national guidelines to explain the CBM process and CBM forms to national stakeholders;
 - ii. Develop a "national form" to request specific information from national stakeholders that is required for compiling the CBM forms;
 - iii. Translate CBM forms into national languages;
 - iv. Identify/establish focal points in relevant national administrations for the purposes of BWC matters;
 - v. Engage with industry, the private sector and academia concerning input to the CBM forms;
 - vi. Enhance inter-agency coordination mechanisms for data collection and validation;

- vii. Plan for a suitable timeline at the national level to ensure smooth data collection and timely submission;
- viii. Discuss and agree on the CBM submission method and accessibility (public available/restricted access); and
- ix. Request assistance from the ISU concerning preparation and submission of CBMs.

IX. Conclusions and next steps

The Training Course led to an increased number of NCP nominations, including 18 States Parties having designated an NCP for the first time, higher levels of interaction by UNODA and the ISU with NCPs on the implementation of the Convention at the national level, as well as to intensified exchanges of best practices among NCPs within and across regions.

Additionally, the sessions on the elaboration of CBM reports also contributed to a steady increase in the numbers of CBM reports submitted, with the highest-ever number of CBMs received from 104 States Parties in 2023 and reaching 74 CBM submissions already by May 2024.

Diagram 16 – Overall rate of CBM Report Submissions



Looking forward, the training material developed for the Training Course will be transformed into e-learning modules made publicly available and will be added as a learning resource to the UNODA Disarmament Education dashboard by the end of 2024.

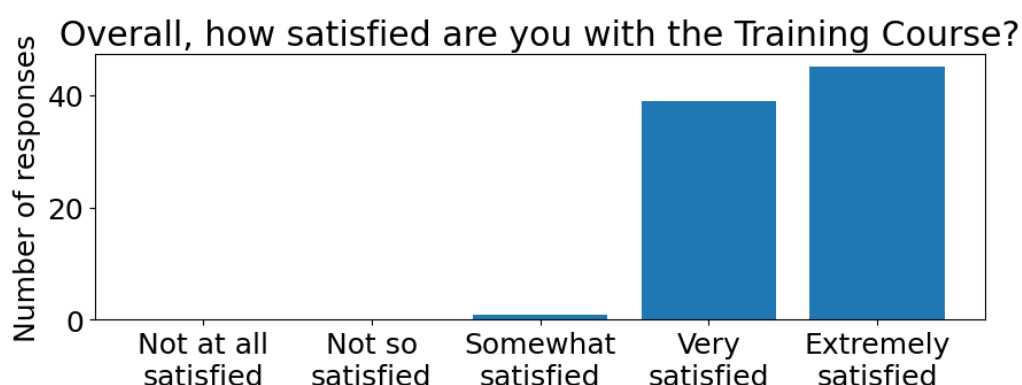
A global event for NCPs will be organized in Geneva in 2024 to continue creating opportunities for dialogue between regions, exchange of knowledge, best practices and lessons learned on BWC implementation at the national level and contribute to further enhance the network of NCPs.

UNODA will seek additional funding with a view to host similar events for NCPs on an annual basis.

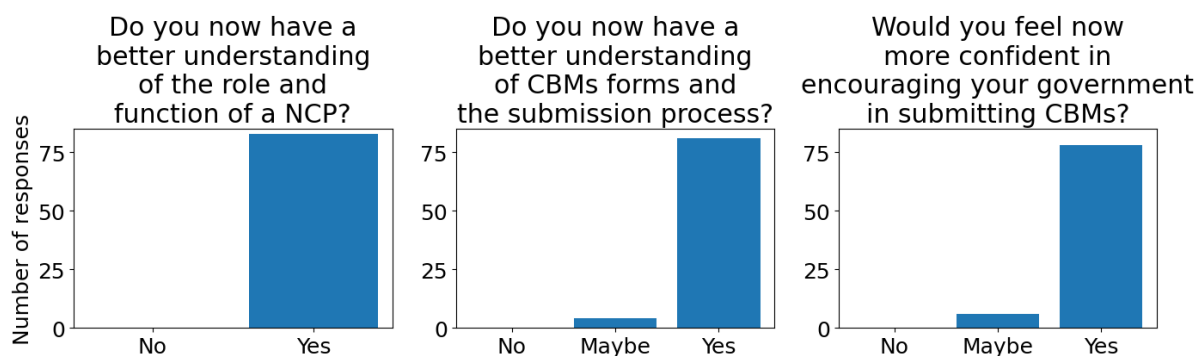
Annex

Participants conveyed appreciation for the Regional Training Courses, as shown in the diagram below.

**Diagram 17 - Participants' feedback
(based on 85 responses received)**



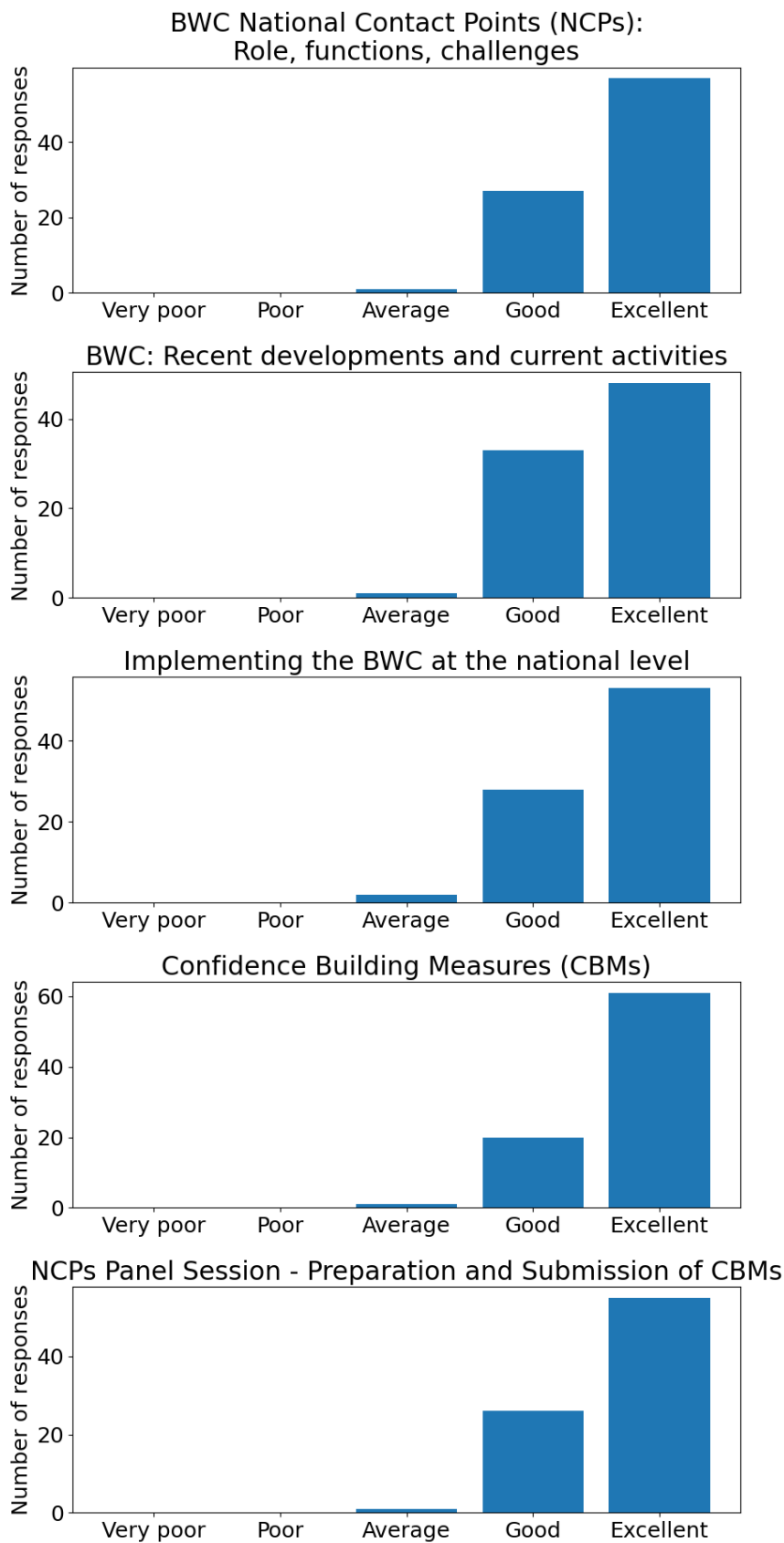
More than half of the participants completed the feedback form. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and indicated that the Training Course was found to be useful, well-structured and met its stated learning objectives.



Participants reported having a better understanding of the roles and function of an NCP and of the preparation and submission of CBMs. All participants positively rated the thematic sessions and interactive exercises, as shown in the diagram below, and reported having appreciated the opportunity to interact with UNODA staff to advance national implementation of the BWC.

Diagram 18 - Participants' feedback

How would you rate each of the thematic sessions in terms of organization and presentation?





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