



**UNODA**  
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR  
DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS



## Science for Diplomats

**15-16 March 2023**

**Palais des Nations, Geneva**

Science diplomacy has emerged as an important tool in multilateral settings with science informing diplomatic deliberations and decision-making processes. Science and technology underpin several articles of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), making it crucial for the Convention to be informed of the latest developments in these areas. However, there remain gaps between scientific and diplomatic communities that should be bridged. These gaps include differences in priorities, methodologies, terminologies, timelines and the way in which scientific and diplomatic issues are communicated to non-specialist audiences.

Science diplomacy could, therefore, benefit from becoming more hands-on, contributing positively to enhance diplomats' and policymakers' understanding of the science and policy interface. It can also play a decisive role in raising awareness within the diplomatic community about the scientific process, risks and opportunities of new advances in science and technology, and the possible impact of these developments on the Convention.

Against this background, UNODA will organize two 'Science for Diplomats' side events in the margins of the upcoming organizational meeting of the Working Group on the strengthening of the Convention. The side events will consist of hands-on scientific experiments and scenario exercises to communicate to policy makers about the scientific process and policy challenges due to scientific advancements. These side events are financially supported by the European Union.

### **Objectives:**

The primary objectives of the two side events are:

- To communicate to diplomats how the scientific process works in interesting and fun ways.
- To brief diplomats about anticipatory science policy and its relevance to the decision of the Ninth Review Conference to develop with a view to establishing a science advisory mechanism.
- To inform diplomats about the emerging areas of artificial intelligence and cyberbiosecurity and their implications for biosafety and biosecurity.
- To raise awareness about the major benefits and risks of relevant scientific developments to the BWC via "hands-on" exercises.

## Event 1

### Simulating Epidemics and Anticipating Future Scientific Advances

- **Date**

15 March 2023

- **Time**

13:15 – 14:45 CET

- **Venue**

Palais des Nations, H Building, rooms 208-209

- **Registration**

<https://forms.office.com/e/5ZJsptH6qm>

Places are limited to the first 40 registrations

#### **Description:**

This side event will include two activities. The first activity will involve a hands-on simulation experiment to identify gaps in biosafety or biosecurity measures that could result in a disease outbreak and discuss how the spread of infectious diseases could occur. The participants will be exposed to the basics of epidemiological studies by using simple materials and reagents, including relevant considerations on how a disease outbreak is tracked and managed.

The second activity will concentrate on anticipatory science policy by introducing the GESDA (Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator) Science Breakthrough Radar for participants to address and discuss possible future challenges and emerging S&T topics. The interactive exercise will include a case study focused on transmission of infectious diseases through a genetically modified biological vector. This activity will familiarize diplomats with some of the tools available for understanding the trends in scientific research and their possible implications and could contribute to inform discussions on the establishment of a science advisory mechanism for the BWC.

#### **Agenda**

Time (CET)	Program
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13:00 – 13:15	Light lunch (will be provided)
13:15 – 13:25	Introduction to Activity-1
13:25 – 13:50	<u>Activity-1</u> : Hands-on simulation experiment on infectious disease spread
13:50 – 14:00	Introduction to Activity-2
14:00 – 14:40	<u>Activity-2</u> : Interactive exercise on anticipatory science policy for disease outbreak
14:40 – 14:45	Participant feedback and conclusion

## Event 2

### Understanding the Emerging Risks involving Biological Data

- **Date**  
16 March 2023
- **Time**  
13:15 – 14:45 CET
- **Venue**  
Palais des Nations, H Building, rooms 208-209
- **Registration**  
<https://forms.office.com/e/fggQwhNcQa>  
Places are limited to the first 40 registrations

**Description:**

The side event will consist of a scenario-based exercise to understand biological data and analyze risks involving advances in artificial intelligence and cyber technologies.

The scenario exercise will be based on a cyber-attack on a research facility, exploring the responses of different actors. It will stimulate guided discussions on biorisk assessment and management in relation to the BWC and address how emerging technologies could be potentially used to steal, destroy or manipulate crucial biological data.

The exercise will provide the platform for participants to share and explore preparedness and response measures to prevent and counter the potential malicious use of these emerging technologies.

**Agenda**

Time (CET)	Program
13:00 – 13:20	Light lunch (will be provided)
13:20 – 13:40	Introduction to the scenario exercise
13:40 – 14:20	Scenario exercise on emerging risks involving biological data
14:20 – 14:45	Participant feedback and conclusion