

COUNTER WMD DISINFORMATION INITIATIVE

NGO STATEMENT TO BWC MEETING OF STATES PARTIES

DECEMBER 2024



While NGO statements were not delivered during the 2024 BWC MSP, we had prepared the below statement that would have been delivered on behalf of the GP Counter WMD Disinformation Initiative.

Dear Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

This year, we have seen an increase in malicious disinformation campaigns and information manipulation tactics that negatively impact cooperative threat reduction efforts and that are eroding trust in our international disarmament treaties and their safeguarding institutions, including the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

Disinformation campaigns across the spectrum of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) domains pose a critical threat to international security. Nonproliferation and disarmament activities are particularly vulnerable to these hostile tactics due to their technical complexity and dual-use nature. These disinformation campaigns can undermine trust in the rules-based international system and the multilateral disarmament fora that help to support it, they can jeopardize the hard work of the BWC-ISU and States Parties in upholding the Biological Weapons Convention and can provide opportunities to amplify fear and confusion among the general public. Failing to take decisive action could allow disinformation to weaken critical disarmament agreements, to destabilize multilateral institutions, heighten tensions within the global community, and severely impede peaceful international cooperation and support.

We are pleased to note the priority and commitments that multilateral institutions including the BWC, as well as many States Parties and delegates here today, have placed upon combatting and countering disinformation. The international community has a responsibility to continue to identify and address disinformation campaigns as they are developed and to proactively combat these false narratives. As an exemplar of this effort, the 31 members of the G7-led Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction launched the Countering WMD Disinformation initiative. Further endorsed by the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism, the initiative is a coordinated, multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary effort to understand and counter state-sponsored or state-adjacent disinformation across the CBRN spectrum.

The GP Counter WMD Disinformation initiative, with initial funding from the Government of Canada, brings together four leading organizations to collaboratively develop approaches to counter CBRN disinformation. Activities include developing tailored tools to support such efforts, monitoring and flagging concerning disinformation narratives in real-time, and training diplomats and practitioners to readily identify and anticipate disinformation narratives that could impact global nonproliferation efforts. We encourage all delegations to explore the resources available on our website, GPWMDcounterdisinfo.com, which includes policy briefs, concise reports, case studies and video explainers.

We would like to thank the Italian Government for their leadership during their G7 presidency, the GP members who sit on the steering committee for this initiative, and all GP members for continuing to identify and create provide valuable insights into CBRN disinformation tactics, including analysis of both current and past disinformation campaigns, and present effective strategies to address these growing threats.

We encourage all delegations to engage with this initiative, to help prevent and counter harmful disinformation related to all forms of WMD, to ensure that efforts to enhance Article X cooperation are not undermined, to support the work of the BWC-ISU, and to work towards a safer and more secure world.

We thank you for your kind attention,

The GP Counter WMD Disinformation Initiative

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE GP WMD COUNTER DISINFO INITIATIVE AT GPWMDCOUNTERDISINFO.COM

