

**AD HOC GROUP OF THE STATES PARTIES
TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE
DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION AND STOCKPILING
OF BACTERIOLOGICAL (BIOLOGICAL) AND
TOXIN WEAPONS AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION**

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Working paper submitted by France

International epidemiological monitoring network

The purpose of this document is to explain the working paper submitted by France (BWC/AD HOC GROUP/WP.134) dated 10 March 1997 on the establishment of an international epidemiological monitoring network. The term "network" may have caused confusion and given the impression that substantial machinery would be needed. In order to make it clear what is being proposed, we shall use in this document the concept of a "database" or "virtual network".

1. Objectives of the international epidemiological database

What this involves, for the Technical Secretariat, is the establishment of a database relating to the appearance of unusual pathologies or epidemics in order to provide the organization with a monitoring and analysis capacity, particularly in connection with requests for investigations into alleged use and unusual epidemics.

The network's data and expertise will constitute one tool, among others, available to the Technical Secretariat for following up requests for investigations it receives.

2. Collection of information

Information will be collected essentially on the basis of the pre-existing electronic data available, whether in the databases of international organizations (WHO, IOE, FAO, etc.), or in national or regional databases (e.g. the proposed European monitoring and response network for transmissible diseases).

3. Size and facilities

In order to collect and process the data, with adequate expertise, a small unit (about five persons) in the Technical Secretariat with access to Internet and with computer facilities would be ample.

4. Cost

The cost of such a "virtual network", which is essential if the organization is to fulfil its functions, will be minor, particularly in view of the fact that there will be no question of duplicating existing networks. It will be mainly limited to communications and staff salaries.
