Mr President,

As this is the first time my delegation takes the floor in this expert meeting, please allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of our meetings in 2015. As vice-president of the BTWC this year I look forward working with you in this crucial year that leads us to the Review Conference in 2016. I know that we are in very capable hands. I therefore assure you of the full cooperation and support of my delegation.

Allow me also to use this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Daniel Feaks on assuming his role as head of the ISU. Although we have seen him around since last year, this meeting marks the first time in his role. As we do not doubt he misses The Hague every day, we thought that some Dutch stroopwafels will help him through his first year in Geneva and ease his transition.

Mr President,

This will be the last expert meeting before the RevCon in 2016. With only one States Parties meeting and a PrepCom ahead, we need to continue to think about how we maintain and strengthen compliance with the Convention as we move forward to 2016.

At the 7th RevCon in 2011, which was presided by the Netherlands, States Parties agreed that the intersessional process 2011-2016 should address three Standing Agenda items. Education, biosafety and biosecurity are all key elements in each of these items.
To further strengthen the implementation of the Convention in the Netherlands, we have set up a comprehensive biosecurity regime. Raising biosecurity awareness and education is an integral part of this regime. At this expert meeting we will provide insight in the Dutch biosecurity regime that we are currently implementing. We are doing this by organizing three side-events this week.

Tomorrow **11 August from 13.00-15.00 pm in Room XXIII** in a side event together with the UK we will present a new Textbook on Biosecurity. This textbook ‘Do no Harm: Safeguarding Science in the 21st Century’, is jointly funded by the Global Partnerships Programmes of Canada and the UK and serves as the latest example of our joint efforts in awareness raising in the field of biosecurity.

**Wednesday 12 August from 13.00-15.00 pm in Room XXIII** the United States and the Netherlands will co-host a side-event that will focus on Dual Use Research in life sciences, entitled ‘National Measures to Address Dual Use Research’. The Netherlands integrated the lessons learned from the dual use aspects of H5N1 research in a new comprehensive biosecurity policy that will be presented at the side-event. Indonesia and Malaysia will also participate in the event and share their national efforts in this field.

On **Thursday 13 August from 13.00-15.00 pm in Room XXII** the Netherlands is organizing the side-event ‘The Dutch Bottom Up approach in raising biosecurity awareness: how to reach professionals, students and amateurs?’. The side-event aims to provide insight in the activities undertaken by the Netherlands to increase biosecurity awareness among biosecurity professionals and scientist.

In the framework of art VII and art X, we consider the outreach activities of the Netherlands Biosecurity Office as an appropriate and useful tool. The Dutch biosecurity regime
works bottom-up rather than top down. Each stakeholder has its own responsibilities, which involves awareness, education, and risk management in the field of biosecurity and non-proliferation. The role of the government is to stimulate and facilitate the necessary awareness and capabilities.

The Dutch approach that will be presented at the side-event, has resulted in increasing interest and follow-up from other States Parties and international organizations.

Mr President,

The Netherlands attaches great importance to the full implementation of all commitments of States Parties. Building confidence in compliance with the BTWC, supporting its national implementation, and promoting its universality remain our top priorities. Several States are currently trying to initiate a broader debate on compliance issues while confronted with a growing need to create new tools to enable States Parties to demonstrate their compliance.

In this context the Netherlands attaches importance to an effective and substantial preparation process towards the 2016 RevCon. All stakeholders should be involved on discussion on the best way forward. In order to be able to reach a positive and substantive outcome at the RevCon we suggested last year setting up informal open ended meetings with all interested States Parties to build further on efforts in areas where common understanding and consensus exists.

We believe a broader debate on compliance issues is necessary. To facilitate and stimulate such a dialogue the Netherlands financed several meetings on this matter. We are partially financing the upcoming Wilton Park follow-up conference on compliance entitled: Compliance with the BTWC: strategies towards the 2016 Review Conference that will take place from 23-25 September.
In our view, it is currently neither possible nor politically feasible to return to negotiations on a legally binding additional protocol to the BTWC. There is no consensus on how to take this forward. We are willing to work towards identifying options that could achieve similar goals. The current intersessional process offers an opportunity to identify new approaches, to enhance national implementation through voluntary exchanges of information, such as the peer review mechanism.

In follow-up to the French peer-review, the Netherlands is conducting this year a BENELUX Peer Review exercise, with Belgium and Luxembourg. We submitted a Working Paper together entitled BENELUX Peer review: outline of key features and objectives, in which we elaborate more on the modalities of the exercise. By conducting this exercise we aim to improve the national implementation of the Convention while contributing to build confidence between States Parties. We have decided to give the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) a role in our exercise. As we consider CBMs a unique instrument to help increase mutual trust and generate transparency, the CBMs will form the basis of the respective national implementation evaluation.

We intend to present the outcome of the BENELUX peer-review exercise at the next MSP in December at a joint side-event.

Thank you.