• Madam/Mister Chair, Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,

• I would like to thank the organizers for inviting INTERPOL to participate as an Observer at this Meeting of States Parties.

• It is our pleasure to participate and to contribute our law enforcement perspective and experience to these discussions.

• We would like to begin by emphasizing INTERPOL’s readiness to support States Parties:
  • To counter the malicious use of biological agents and toxins by non-state actors, and
  • To support the response to infectious disease outbreaks.

• As a global law enforcement cooperation organisation, INTERPOL, through our Incident Response Teams and operational mandate, is well placed to deploy rapidly to support our Member Countries.

• The competent bureau at INTERPOL on this subject is the Bioterrorism Prevention Unit, housed with the CBRNE and Vulnerable Targets Sub-Directorate which itself is part of the Counter-Terrorism Directorate.

• However we participate in this event not only to represent our Organization and its capabilities with regard to the BWC, but also to represent our law enforcement constituency.

• In recent years, we have seen several examples of how public health crises can lead to a deterioration of law and order, attacks on healthcare workers and humanitarian responders, and the weakening of national institutions.
• At the same time, in many countries, law enforcement represents the largest Government interface with the civilian population, and therefore has a key role to play in identifying the indicators of disease outbreaks, providing on-the-ground information to decision makers, communicating and cooperating with health officials, and providing access to national and international partners.

• And where there is a role for national law enforcement, INTERPOL supports at the international level.

• This also holds true for animal- or plant-health crises. The malicious use of biological agents or toxins on animal and plant life represents a major concern that continues to evolve. Here, national law enforcement represents a key stakeholder in both the prevention and response to incidents of a nefarious nature.

• Throughout our work, we encourage enhanced cooperation between veterinary and plant health services and law enforcement in order to break down silos and enhance our collective safety and security.

• At the international level, we coordinate our own efforts through partners such as the WHO, FAO and OIE.

• In closing, we take this opportunity to wish the Chair, and all States Parties, a very successful Meeting. We stand ready to further discuss the ways in which we can support your work over the course of this week.

• Thank you very much for your attention.