Mr Chair,

Thank you for the opportunity to address you during the Meeting of States Parties.

Mr. Chair

The World Organisation for Animal Health, the OIE, is an intergovernmental organization founded in 1924 to respond to animal disease at an international level. The OIE has 182 Member Countries and 13 regional and sub-regional offices across the globe. OIE’s mandate is to improve animal health and animal welfare worldwide and OIE’s strategy is based on strengthening the capacity of national veterinary services to respond effectively to disease outbreaks regardless of whether they are of natural, accidental or deliberate origin.

Awareness raising and training are two important pillars for supporting OIE’s biological threat reduction strategy. To this effect the OIE organizes or participates in tabletop exercises. In addition, the OIE offers training for laboratory focal points and a laboratory twinning program. This program aims at capacity development and it has clear implications for biological threat reduction as in many cases the twinning projects are related to biothreat agents. Currently, 58 laboratory twinning projects are completed, 27 are underway and nine more are approved.

Laboratories play a key role in responding to health emergencies, natural or man-made. However, lack of sustainability in many countries undermines laboratory safety and performance. Thanks to the generous support of Global Affairs Canada, the OIE is working to identify and develop solutions to improve the sustainability of laboratories. This initiative is being taken forward with multiple partners including laboratory and innovation experts in Member Countries; regional bodies such as African Union (AU-PANVAC), WHO and Chatham House.

The project focuses on critical areas of work:

- Data analysis on investment needs for sustainable laboratory biosafety and biosecurity based on Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Pathway data
- Developing key performance indicators, evidence-based arguments, and advocacy tools for OIE Members to support their resource mobilisation
- Enhancing the Sustainable Laboratories toolbox to enable OIE Member Countries better understand capital and operating expenditures and true cost of analysis
- Review of scientific literature to support biological risk management, identify gaps in the evidence base and prioritise future research
- Convening an Open Innovation Consortium to find breakthrough solutions

Global Affairs Canada is also supporting a collaborative project between the OIE, FAO and INTERPOL. This ambitious 3-year project aims to ‘build resilience against agro-terror and
agro-crime’ by strengthening capacity for emergency management and fostering linkages between veterinary services and law enforcement authorities. Recent activities include an international workshop on improving sustainable management of animal health emergencies. Future activities include FAO regional trainings in emergency management and simulation exercises, INTERPOL training in command and control, and an international simulation exercise. The project will culminate in 2021 with a Global Conference on emergency management, which will showcase the outcomes of the project and set a roadmap for future collaborative work.

Intersectoral cooperation is of fundamental importance to ensure global disease security though biological threat reduction. OIE remains committed to this task and collaboration with international partners including the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Materials and Weapons of Mass Destruction, FAO, WHO, INTERPOL, UNODA, UNICRI, VERTIC, UN Security Council Resolution 1540 and the Biological Weapons Convention.

For further information about the activities of the OIE please visit the OIE website at www.oie.int.

Thank you Mr Chairman.