



**Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction
Geneva, Switzerland – 05 December 2017**

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Mr Chairman, Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates.

It is a great pleasure for INTERPOL to get the opportunity of addressing the Meeting of States Parties to the “Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction”.

Recognizing the importance of the BTWC as the cornerstone of the international legal framework designed to counter biological weapons and threats, INTERPOL has been actively participating – under its Observer Status – in numerous Meetings of States Parties and Experts Meetings in recent years.

The threat from bioterrorism is growing with terrorist groups demonstrating interest in obtaining or using biological agents, among other non-conventional materials, as weapons. In parallel, recent biological scientific advancements have provided a wider spectrum of dual-use technologies susceptible of misuse or unlawful exploitation.

These threats have triggered a number of INTERPOL member countries to increase their preparedness in the areas of biosecurity, biosafety, critical infrastructure countermeasures, and risk mitigation and response.

As early as 2004, INTERPOL identified bioterrorism as a key threat to international peace and security. Through the establishment of a dedicated then-entitled “Bioterrorism Prevention Programme” INTERPOL became one of the key international actors contributing to the international effort to combat the threat of bioterrorism.

Today INTERPOL addresses non-state actor based biological threats through a holistic approach under the umbrella of its “Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive (CBRNE) Terrorism, and Vulnerable Targets Sub-Directorate”.

A dedicated Bioterrorism Prevention Unit works with law enforcement, health, academia and industry to tackle this specific and challenging crime, and is engaged in a number of projects and activities designed to reduce the threat of a bioterrorism and establish effective countermeasures as part of INTERPOL’s Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

At INTERPOL, our aim is to facilitate targeted training and capacity building for law enforcement agencies on how to prevent, prepare and respond to a bioterrorist attack, as well as to promote inter-agency coordination through a series of guidance manuals, operational information sharing tools and intelligence reports.

I take this opportunity to share with you some of INTERPOL's main flagship initiatives, which wouldn't have seen the light without generous contributions from the Governments of Canada and the United States of America. Their common denominator is INTERPOL's unique position to provide an international law enforcement platform bringing together relevant stakeholders such as scientists, academics, health professionals and agriculture experts to prevent, prepare, respond and prosecute those who are involved in bioterrorism attacks:

- **Project "Pandora"** is a cybercrime workshop and operational exercise aiming to increase the capability of police investigators and intelligence analysts working in the area of cybercrime, organized crime and counter-terrorism, to detect triggers and indicators of potential criminal activity related to the access, purchase and illegal distribution of biological materials and equipment through the Darknet.
- **Project "Petrichor"** includes bioterrorism risk management interagency workshops to help identifying national and regional vulnerabilities at border locations and assist countries to develop strategies to prevent, detect and respond to acts of bioterrorism.
- **Project "RHINO"** stands for Response capability, Hazard assessment, Infection control, National coordination and Organization change. It has been assisting national law enforcement agencies in West African countries to assess their capabilities and develop action plans for improved inter-agency coordination in the wake of the Ebola crisis.

To give you an idea of the concrete outcomes of such initiatives, INTERPOL has recently witnessed an increase of assistance requests from within the Middle East and North Africa region. Few months after delivering a targeted training in the region, national authorities of a beneficiary country were able to seize biological materials within the framework of a counter-terrorism investigation. This was followed by a request for INTERPOL to publish a Purple Notice aiming to alert member countries of a specific terrorist modus operandi.

Mr Chairman, Excellencies,

INTERPOL is committed to support law enforcement authorities in its 192 member countries in confronting the increasing complex global threat of bioterrorism.

Law enforcement is, nonetheless, far from being the only factor in this equation. Development of partnerships amongst relevant international stakeholders became possible thanks to multilateral frameworks such as the BTWC, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 and its Group of Experts, the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, and the Global Health Security Agenda. As the international community faces an increasingly alarming threat, these multilateral frameworks remain pivotal against the risk of a fragmented global response architecture.

Thank you Mr Chairman