STATEMENT BY

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ON BEHALF OF

THE EUROPEAN UNION CHEMICAL BIOLOGICAL RADIOLOGICAL NUCLEAR RISK MITIGATION CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE

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THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER, REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

TO

THE MEETING 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

Geneva, 3-6 December 2019
Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege to make a Statement to the Meeting of the State Parties of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, which I am doing on behalf of the European Union Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative and the International Science and Technology Center (ISTC).

The Centres of Excellence Initiative was launched in response to the need to strengthen the institutional capacity of countries outside the European Union to mitigate CBRN risks. It works in partnership between experts from the 28 European Union member countries and 61 partner countries, which are divided over 8 regions. The Initiative encourages local ownership of CBRN action plans, policies and joint preparation of regional project proposals.

The ISTC is an intergovernmental organization which is headquartered in Nur-Sultan, Republic of Kazakhstan, with member states of Armenia, European Union, Georgia, Japan, Kazakhstan, South-Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Norway, Tajikistan, and the USA. Its mission is to address the global security threat of the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction-applicable CBRN knowledge and materials, and to support development and sustainment of a culture of non-proliferation and CBRN security awareness and responsibility.

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the EU Centres of Excellence Initiative, ISTC is implementing various projects in Central Asia, Africa and the Middle East. One of these projects is Project 53, titled ‘Strengthening the National Legal Framework and Provision of Specialized Training on Biosafety and Biosecurity in Central Asian Countries’, which was funded for six and a half million Euros with seven participating countries: Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Previously, I reported to this assembly the planned activities under Project 53 to be conducted jointly by the National Team of Experts of each of the Partner Counties, the ISTC and the EU Team of Experts, which is a consortium led by the Sustainable Criminal Justice Solutions, and includes the Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (or VERTIC), Public Health England, and the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment. Since the last time I reported, we jointly were able to:
• Raise awareness and promote collaboration regarding biosafety, biosecurity emergency response and incident management issues. Including, involving civil society, such as, by co-organising a regional conference with the Biosafety Association of Central Asia and the Caucasus in March 2019, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, with participation of 170 regional and international expert, which is also the subject of a side event on 4 December during the lunch break;

• Support strengthening national legal systems addressing biosafety and biosecurity, which was performed by Partner Country experts in close cooperation with our EU experts (VERTIC) through performing in-depth analysis of national legislation.

• Develop and implement national and regional training systems for biosafety and biosecurity. Such as, training 88 specialists from the 7 Partner Countries to be biosafety trainers. These newly trained trainers then trained over 1900 specialists in their respective countries and regional partner countries.

Currently, the Project, in cooperation with the German Bundeswehr Institute of Microbiology, is in the process of providing two mobile laboratories and training to Uzbekistan to enhance their surveillance and emergency response capabilities.

Mr. Chairman, in summary Project 53 is an example of how the EU Centres of Excellence Initiative and the International Science and Technology Center can support the practical implementation of some of the core objectives of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, namely:

- enhancing national legislation for biosecurity;
- raising biosecurity awareness, capabilities and capacities;
- stimulating a culture of responsibility for biosecurity; and
- supporting regional and inter-regional cooperation, as well as, engagement with civil society on these important issues.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.