STATEMENT BY THE WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH TO
THE 2017 MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE 1972 BIOLOGICAL AND
TOXIN WEAPONS CONVENTION

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Mr Chair, Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

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

Mr. Chairman,

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 181
Member Countries and 12 regional and sub-regional offices across the globe; the headquarters
is located in Paris. OIE’s mandate is to improve animal health and animal welfare worldwide
and OIE has a strategy in place that takes into account an all hazards approach, not
distinguishing between naturally occurring animal disease outbreaks, and those of accidental
or deliberate origin.

The OIE Biological Threat Reduction Strategy underlines that by strengthening existing
systems for surveillance and early on-farm detection rapid response is the most effective and
sustainable way to protect against threats from deliberate and accidental releases of animal
pathogens. As such this “all-hazards approach” to animal disease control and prevention
allows the OIE to implement projects and activities designed to strengthen capacity for
naturally occurring outbreaks but also allows for building awareness around biological threat
reduction more broadly.

For example, an OIE-convened ad hoc group is finalizing guidelines for the investigation of
suspicious biological events. These guidelines focus on the differences between purely
epidemiological investigations and investigations pertaining to suspicious biological events;
they are expected to be finalized in early 2018.

Awareness raising and training are two important columns for supporting the biological threat
reduction strategy. To this effect the OIE participates or organizes inter alia table-top
exercises. A regional exercise was developed jointly with UNICRI and INTERPOL for the
Middle East and Northern Africa Region, bringing together the veterinary health and law
enforcement sectors. Another regional exercise, supported by VERTIC and UNICRI, with
participants from Central American countries was held in Panama and focused on veterinary
legislation in the context of biological threat reduction.

Since the declaration of rinderpest eradication, in 2011, OIE has been collaborating with FAO
to reduce the holdings of rinderpest virus stored in laboratories worldwide by sequestering
them in approved holding facilities or destroying them when possible. The number of
institutes holding rinderpest virus declined from 28 in 2013 to 16 in 2016. Hence, this work is
not yet completed and advocacy for destruction of the remaining stocks is ongoing. This is the
first animal disease to be eradicated, as such should it ever resurface, a Global Rinderpest Action Plan is in the final stages of development and aims to ensure continued global freedom from rinderpest by outlining the actions necessary to prepare for, respond to and recover from a rinderpest outbreak. This plan is also comprised of an operational framework for the management and deployment of a global rinderpest vaccine reserve.

Building upon the momentum from the 1st OIE Global Conference on Biological Threat Reduction in 2015, the 2nd OIE Global Conference on Biological Threat Reduction was held in Ottawa, Canada on 31 October to 2 November 2017. The conference focused on non-proliferation instruments, the use of technologies, intersectoral cooperation and the future of biological threat reduction. More than 300 participants from 70 countries discussed these topics and adopted twelve recommendations on focus areas. These recommendations can be found on the conference website and will be leveraged to continue our work with partners in enhancing health and security.

Mr. Chair,

These are a few examples of how the OIE is working with partners on specific activities to bring different sectors together where we can benefit from the capabilities of others whether it is for assessing systems of response, surveillance and risk management or enhancing structures in place for biological threat reduction and non-proliferation.

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 IATA, FAO, WHO, UNODA 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 and Distinguished Representatives.