

**Statement by H.E. Ms. Veronika Bard
Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations in Geneva
2017 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention
4 December 2017**

Mr. Chairman,

Sweden is fully aligned with the statement to be delivered by the European Union. I would like to make a few brief additional comments from a national viewpoint.

But first of all, let me welcome your appointment as the chairman of this Meeting of States Parties, and assure you of the full support of my delegation for your efforts towards a successful outcome.

I would also like to welcome Samoa as the newest State Party to the BTWC. The membership now stands at 179 States Parties. We are steadily progressing towards the goal of the universalization of the Convention.

Let me also express Sweden's appreciation for the work of the Implementation Support Unit.

Sweden would like to encourage all States Parties to adopt a gender perspective in the context of the BTWC and on disarmament in general.

Mr. Chairman,

The legal norm against biological weapons established in the BTWC continues to be imperative for international security. Nonetheless, we must continue to strengthen the Convention and its implementation. The possibility – and indeed the threat - that states or non-state actors could develop and use biological weapons are real.

Progress in science and technology and the globalization of relevant expertise have increased the proliferation risks related to biological weapons. Technical knowledge and equipment used for legitimate purposes – in some cases holding great progress for curing some of the most dangerous and deadly diseases - could sometimes also be exploited to develop new types of biological weapons. As States Parties, we must join forces to monitor such science and technology and avoid their misuse.

Another important area for cooperation among States Parties and International Organizations is protection and assistance in case a State Party has been exposed to danger as a result of violation of the Convention. Sweden is ready to engage in dialogue

with other States Parties on how to best strengthen Article VII. Such a dialogue in an open-ended working group format could be of great benefit to us all.

Mr. Chairman,

Over the past year, Sweden has continued to actively engage in addressing various aspects of the Convention. Let me give you a few examples:

- Swedish allocations in 2017 to development assistance and research collaboration of significance to Article X of the Convention amounted to more than 120 million euros.
- Sweden remains a global leader in the fight against antimicrobial resistance. A new multi-million euro national programme was launched this year to promote research on new antibiotics and awareness on how to counter resistance.
- Swedish experts have participated in several Joint External Evaluation under the WHO and the Global Health Security Agenda.
- Sweden continued efforts to strengthen the Secretary General's Mechanism. Earlier this year, a project was initiated by Denmark and the United States in cooperation with Sweden to develop a lab network for genomic analysis.
- As co-chair of the Global Partnership Biosecurity Sub-Working Group this year, Sweden has assumed an active role in countering proliferation of biological weapons to non-state actors.

Mr. Chairman,

Sweden, like the overwhelming majority of States Parties, was disappointed with the failure to reach a substantive outcome at last year's Review Conference. It was a missed opportunity to start a new and improved Intersessional Programme. In this Meeting of States Parties, our focus must be on an agreement on an Intersessional Programme leading to the Ninth Review Conference in 2021. Much effort was made to that end at last year's Review Conference. We should build on last year's efforts to agree on an Intersessional Programme that would benefit all States Parties.

We stand ready to work with all States Parties to establish a goal-oriented ISP with a view to generating results that would strengthen the Convention. In this regard we believe that the working paper presented by the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America is a good basis for reaching a consensual outcome.

Arriving at consensus will require that all States Parties show responsibility and flexibility to reach a decision that would benefit us all.

With these words, I wish us all a productive and successful meeting.

Thank you.