Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and
Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their
Destruction

Geneva, 4-7 December 2018

Statement by Germany- Meeting of State Parties

Mr. Chairman,

Please, allow me to congratulate you on assuming the chairmanship of this Meeting of States Parties to the BTWC. We are particularly thankful for all your efforts which contributed to the convening of this meeting. I would like to express my appreciation and full confidence in you guiding us through the meeting and towards a successful outcome. I would like to assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

Mr. Chairman,

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union still to be delivered.

More than 40 years ago, our visionary predecessors banned the development, production and stockpiling of biological and toxin weapons, in the conviction - that we continue to share today - that their use would be repugnant to the conscience of mankind. At a time when the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture is strained, it is worthwhile to recall and appreciate the continued strength of this commitment.
At the same time, the alleged bioterrorist plot, currently under investigation by German authorities, is an indication of increasing interest of non-state actors’ in biological and toxin weapons. Rapid developments in the life sciences are a potent source of good and well-being. Yet the dual use potential of specific applications and technologies which could lead to the development of yet unknown biological weapons requires all our attention.

This intersessional programme is an important opportunity to further improve the implementation of the Convention. It started promisingly with a series of interactive, well-informed and constructive Meetings of Experts. I am convinced that important progress is within reach. This Meeting and the next Meetings of Experts and States Parties should channel this momentum into concrete actions.

Mr. Chairman,

It is a testament to the relevance of the Convention that the ranks of its supporters are continuously reinforced, as we move ever closer to our goal of universality. We encourage new members to stay true to their commitment made in joining the BTWC and to engage constructively in our work.

An open and transparent exchange between States Parties on best practices but also on challenges and hurdles to national implementation may increase confidence in our joint commitment to the Convention. During last month’s peer review visit at the Richard Lugar Center for Public Health Research, Georgia demonstrated such transparency.

We strongly support ideas expressed at the Meetings of Experts to encourage the compilation and transmission of lessons-learned from past transparency exercises in order to provide inspiration and guidance for future transparency initiatives. We invite you all to attend today’s side-event on the peer review visit in Tiflis.

Mr. Chairman,
The Confidence Building Measures are so far the only substantive commitment to build confidence through transparency agreed upon by all States Parties. The new electronic CBM facility, combined with the "step-by-step approach", provides a response to the difficulties experienced by some States Parties in preparing submissions.

In the event of a potential bioweapons’ incident, the **UNSGM** would be the only investigative response mechanism at our disposal. On Thursday, a side-event will provide us with the opportunity to present some of the existing efforts by States Parties and the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs to strengthen its reliability and operability.

Mr. Chairman,

This MSP specifically has the mandate to review measures to address financial predictability and sustainability. We have this very concrete task to fulfil over the course of the next four days. This task will require creativity and a lot of political will from all sides. We are confident that you will build on your efforts in the run-up to this meeting to guide us to a successful and sustainable outcome. Germany stands ready to contribute to all efforts in order to reach that goal. Let us not forget however, that we would not be in this situation, if all States Parties were simply to honour their financial obligations.

In closing, I would also like to thank the staff of the Implementation Support Unit for their tireless efforts, support and professionalism under these most challenging work circumstances. We owe it to them, as well as to us to find a durable solution.

Thank you, Mr. Chair