STATEMENT
BY H.E. MR. YURIY KLYMENKO, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF UKRAINE TO THE UN OFFICE IN GENEVA
AT THE 2018 MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION
(4 DECEMBER 2018)

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, please allow me, Mr. Ljupčo Jivan Gjorgjinski, to extend my sincere congratulations upon assumption of your duties at the 2018 Meeting of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention and wish you every success in this endeavor. My delegation looks forward to working closely with you and all States Parties over the coming week to bring this event to a successful conclusion.

I also wish to point out from the outset that Ukraine aligns itself with the statements to be delivered later on behalf of the European Union. At the same time I would like to use this opportunity to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

Being one of the co-authors of the BTWC, Ukraine continuously stresses the important role of this indispensable instrument in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The BTWC is an arms control agreement that relates directly to public health, the environment, food security, and biodiversity.

We consider the Convention to be also a proper multilateral basis for developing international cooperation in the field of bio-safety and bio-security, including scientific and technological cluster.

Ukraine fully complies with its obligations under the Convention and has never had the intention to develop, produce, stockpile or acquire in any way the biological or toxin weapons, equipment or means of their delivery. My country annually submits required information on the BTWC implementation within the framework of confidence-building measures adopted in accordance with the Review Conferences’ decisions.

Distinguished delegates,

Originally the BTWC was considered through the focus of attention to the states offensive programs, however the perception of the biological threat has shifted from states developing biological weapon capabilities to use against other states to naturally occurring infectious disease, misuse of technology, accidents, etc.

The complexity of the contemporary threats is greater than during previous historical periods. The range of biological agents that could be used as weapons is expanding, and can include a broad range of biological incidents from naturally occurring pandemics such as influenza to the state use of BW.

Effective response in case of alleged use of biological or toxin agents remains to be one of the priorities for the international community. Therefore, strengthening regional and international cooperation gains particular importance in terms of prevention of bio-threats as well as providing timely assistance to the affected countries.
In this regard, Ukraine notes with satisfaction that 2017 MSP eventually managed to unblock the negotiation process and to reach an agreement on a substantive program of post-8RevCon work.

The meeting of experts held in August this year marks the first success on the way to maintain the relevance of the BTWC to the contemporary threats and challenges.

However, a key difficulty for the inter-session process is how to move beyond merely compiling and reviewing current situation in certain areas, which is the task of experts’ meetings, to developing policies and practical measures to manage the associated risks and opportunities, the task for all of us gathered in this hall today.

**Distinguished delegates,**

Ukraine continues to be seriously worried about the collections of microorganisms which were located at a number of crucial facilities of Ukraine’s biosecurity system currently not under control of the Ukrainian Government because of the external aggression, namely: the Ukrainian anti-plague station in the city of Simferopol, the Crimean republican diagnostic laboratory, as well as Donetsk and Luhansk regional sanitary and epidemiological stations.

These concerns are even further increased in the context of the dangerous militarization by the Russian Federation of illegally occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea, recent act of Russian armed aggression against Ukrainian vessels in the Strait of Kerch, as well as the ongoing hostilities by illegal armed groups, supported by the Russian Federation, in the southeast of our country.

Therefore, we call upon the international community to scrutinize the situation around the above-mentioned elements of the biosecurity system of Ukraine on its temporarily occupied territories.

**Distinguished delegates,**

We welcome the results of peer review exercise held in Tbilisi, Georgia on 14-15 November 2018 and consider that this event fulfilled its mission of making possible to independently and objectively judge on full compliance of Georgia’s NCDC Richard Lugar Center located in Tbilisi with the provisions and obligations under the BTWC.

Ukraine commends the efforts of Georgia to strengthen confidence in compliance and calls upon to remain vigilant against those who distort clear facts and manipulate them with an attempt to mislead the international community.

**Distinguished delegates,**

Ukraine belongs to those countries that support strengthening of the Convention and its implementation, as well as proper functioning of BTWC international fora such as this meeting, ensuring that it is capable of covering all BTWC related matters in terms of allocated time for its conduction and other resources.

We believe that the financial stability of the Convention is a key prerequisite for the above-mentioned and, therefore, we hope that existing budgetary gap will be properly filled soon.
Distinguished delegates,

In our view, it is necessary that the international community takes every effort to improve the effectiveness and universality of the Convention.

Speaking about the effectiveness of the BTWC implementation, there is a need to find the most proper formats for active involvement of all interested parties, including non-governmental organizations, industry and academia, in this process.

Universality of the Convention has always been and will remain one of the key prerequisites for its comprehensive implementation. We believe that concerted effort by States Parties is needed to persuade states not party to join the Convention. In this regard we would like to positively note the decisions of the number of countries to deposit their BTWC instruments of ratification in 2018. We also welcome the imminent ratification of the Convention by Tanzania, which will increase the membership to 183.

Concluding, let me stress once again that the delegation of Ukraine is ready to fully co-operate with you, Mr. Chairman, and the delegations of other States Parties to ensure a fruitful and comprehensive outcome of the meeting.

I thank you.