

Geneva, 4 – 8 December 2017

BTWC Meeting of States Parties

Statement

Cooperation and assistance under Article X

Delegations of Georgia and Germany

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

The BTWC VIII Review Conference recognized the fundamental importance of enhancing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in biological sciences and technology for peaceful purposes, and agreed on the value of working together to promote *inter alia*, disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis, and containment of infectious diseases as well as biological risk management. The Conference reaffirmed that building such capacity would directly support the achievement of the objectives of the Convention.

Georgia and Germany fully support scientific and technological cooperation, as laid down in Article X of the Convention. Both our countries are fully committed to the implementation of all provisions of the Convention and regard awareness-raising, capacity building, networking, detection and diagnostic as suitable measures to increase biosafety and biosecurity.

The Georgian-German relations in public health have a long history, but since 2013, Georgia and Germany have greatly expanded their bilateral cooperation in the field of biosafety and biosecurity. The German - Georgian partnership between the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC), the Bundeswehr Institute of Microbiology (IMB) and the German International Cooperation (GIZ) was established under

an agreement between the Governments of Germany and Georgia. The project is part of the German Biosecurity Program, financed by the German Federal Foreign Office. This German-Georgian joint project aims to extend the relationship between Germany and Georgia with experience and knowledge sharing of German scientists for the establishment of a regional network for biosecurity and diagnostic of dangerous infectious diseases. The project supports the NCDC in performing and improving its main activities: surveillance, control of infectious diseases, identification of epidemics and implementation of countermeasures, etc. Thus the project provides a solid basis reducing bio-risks and tackle biosecurity related issues.

25 years ago Georgia and Germany established their first diplomatic ties, and 2017 has been declared as a year celebrating the friendship of Germany and Georgia. Within its framework a Biosafety and Biosecurity Symposium was held in Tbilisi in October. It highlighted the achievements of the Georgian-German project such as the establishment of a doctoral program, joint investigations, and research, to name just a few.

Next year the Government of Georgia intends to carry out a peer review exercise in order to increase transparency and confidence in compliance with the obligations of the BTWC. States Parties to the Convention will be invited to a transparency visit at Georgia's national public health and biodefence research facility. This initiative is supported by the Federal Republic of Germany and aims to strengthen the Convention.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.