Statement by Mr. Peter Barcroft, Senior Director, International Peace and Security Program

Meeting of States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention

United Nations | Geneva | Switzerland

4th December 2019

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Thank you, Mr. President

On behalf of PGA, a network of 1,300 Parliamentarians in 141 countries, please allow me to congratulate you and the Implementation Support Unit of the BWC in the organization of this year’s Meeting of States Parties.

PGA is privileged and pleased to support the vital universalization efforts of the BWC ISU through the different activates that we organize on behalf of our Membership worldwide.

Mr. President

At the outset, PGA wishes to align itself fully with the Joint Statement just delivered on behalf of the BWC NGO Community.
I would just like to take up a short amount of time this morning to share some additional updates with respect to our organization’s ongoing activities.

In so doing, I hope to underscore the importance of Parliamentarians, with the many prerogatives at their disposal, in achieving our collectively-sought goals.

Mr. President

It will be recalled that at the Meeting of States Parties in December last year, the Government of Tanzania announced that all domestic steps had been taken to allow for ratification of the BWC.

As so many have already done, please allow me also to congratulate the Government of Tanzania in becoming the 183rd State Party in August this year.

We also wish to commend the efforts of the Chair of the PGA National Group in the Parliament of Tanzania, Hon. Jasson Rweikiza.

As we are all aware, however, ratification is but one step in the wider process of implementation, not just of the BWC, but any international treaty.

It is our sincere hope therefore that States that are in a position to do so can follow up warm words of congratulation with meaningful and substantive support on the ground for the many State Parties that are in need of it.

Mr. President

It will also be recalled that at the MSP last year, the Delegation from South Sudan signaled that the BWC was under active review for accession.
We were very pleased when the Government announced its decision to accede in June of this year.

We wish here to also acknowledge the important advocacy efforts of PGA Member Hon. Alma Zak which helped to contribute to this decision.

In very challenging circumstances, Hon. Alma Yak is now seeking to encourage the Transitional National Legislative Authority to give its approval to the decision of the Government earlier in the year.

In the Pacific Islands, our Members also continue to make important progress, most notably in Kiribati in recent months. We are cautiously optimistic that we may see at least one more new State Party from the region in 2020.

Mr. President

Before I conclude, please allow me to make two brief comments.

Many State Party delegations yesterday alluded to the importance of pursuing a gender equality informed process at all times in our efforts to promote ratification and implementation of the BWC.

PGA strongly supports this approach.

It is no coincidence that a large majority of our Members active in promoting ratification and implementation of the BWC in the past 4 years are Women Members of Parliament.

PGA also welcomes the adoption at the end of October of UN Security Council Resolution 2493 as a crucial follow on to UN Security Council Resolution 1325.
My final comment is to encourage all States Parties to engage more fully with their allies in the Legislative branch of Government.

Members of Parliament can be equally effective as advocates for universalization as well as in enacting the necessary implementing legislation.

Seeking universalization of the BWC also requires a universalization of efforts.

Thank you, Mr. President.