STATEMENT
by H.E. Ambassador Yurii KLYMENKO,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva,
Head of the delegation of Ukraine to the Meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Eighth BWC Review Conference
(April 26, 2016, Geneva)

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine let me extend my warmest congratulations to you on the assumption of your duties and wish you every success in this endeavor. Please be assured of my delegation’s full support and cooperation with you to advance the objectives of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

Our delegation aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

Being one of the co-authors of the Convention, Ukraine duly recognizes and continuously stresses the important role played by this essential international instrument in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We consider the BTWC to be an appropriate multilateral basis for the development of joint cooperation in the area of biosafety and biosecurity which needs to be preserved and strengthened.

The Ukrainian side believes it is of utmost importance that the international community continues taking every effort to improve the effectiveness and universality of the Convention through promoting cooperation, exchange of good practices and relevant information in the spheres of biotechnology and biomedicine, as well as educational programs on biosafety and bioethics. In this regard, Ukraine fully complies with its obligations under this fundamental document. We continue submitting on a regular basis our national reports on the implementation of the Convention, as well as provide the WHO Regional Office for Europe with annual reports on communicable diseases.

We believe that Confidence Building Measures (CBM) help increase mutual trust, generate transparency and thus help demonstrate compliance with the Convention. In this vein we underscore the importance of maintaining and strengthening compliance with the Convention as we move towards the Eighth Review Conference taking place on November 7 – 25, 2016.
Distinguished delegates,

The task of the Eighth BTWC Review Conference is to review the Convention and the 2012-2015 Intersessional Process, to promote concrete actions for the future 5 years and explore options to further strengthen the BTWC.

The Eighth Review Conference of the BTWC also gives an opportunity to assess a number of possible compliance mechanisms to strengthen the Convention, including but not limited to: 1) Peer Review Process; 2) combination of improved capacity for in-depth substantive and technical discussions with enhanced authority of the Annual Meeting of the States Parties, strengthened Implementation Support Unit and Greater Oversight and Steering, and other numerous initiatives.

The 2016 Review Conference has to consider other ways to strengthen the Convention, including revising the Intersessional work programme.

Speaking about the effectiveness of the BWC implementation, there is a need to find out the most proper formats for active involvement of all interested parties, including non-governmental organizations, industry and academia, in this process. In this regard, we support the idea of the Chairman to have an informal session for NGO statements at the August meeting of the Preparatory Committee.

Considering other organizational issues Ukraine supports the proposal to request the ISU to prepare two additional background papers, one on developments in relation to the implementation of Article VII of the Convention and one on financial implications of proposals for follow-up action after the Review Conference.

Distinguished delegates,

To tackle the issues before us we need, inter alia, strengthened Implementation Support Unit able to cover, in terms of manpower as well as in terms of other resources, all the related issues. In this regard Ukraine aligns itself with the position of the European Union supporting the prolongation of the ISU’s mandate; the inclusion of further activities in that mandate; the developing a more effective system to review scientific and technological developments; the adoption of an action plan on universalisation coordinated by the ISU; an adequate expansion of the current ISU staff to meet the new objectives and carry out activities mentioned above.

Additional activity for the ISU to the mentioned above could be an increased role in supporting States Parties in national implementation by developing the standard national implementation action plan.
Distinguished delegates,

We also believe it is necessary that the international community implements appropriate measures and intensifies its efforts to increase the universality of the Convention. Universality is not simply an aspiration, or a goal to be achieved for its own sake. We strongly believe that in order to create the atmosphere of international trust, transparency and mutual responsibility, and with aim to give a further credibility to the BTWC, we need much higher degree of participation in the Convention. Since some States have not yet made their choice in favor of BTWC, we also believe that it is common necessity to use all possible political instruments to convince them to join the Convention in order to achieve its ultimate goal - to make the world free of biological weapons. In this regard we would like to welcome the decision of Côte d’Ivoire to deposit its instrument of ratification to the BWC, thereby becoming 174th State Party to the Convention.

Distinguished delegates,

We are aware that the existing confidence-building measures within BWC are useful but not sufficient for ensuring the efficient implementation of the Convention and the safety guarantees. Today, the biological terrorism, natural and technologically induced emergency situations caused by the release of biological hazardous agents represent a real threat to our planet. The Ebola outbreak, which caused more than dramatic consequences for the whole humanity, mobilized the international efforts to overcome this dangerous disease. At the same time the world continues to face a number of possible biothreats of natural and artificial origin. In particular, those arising from the new emerging and reemerging dangerous infectious diseases, drug-resistant diseases, threats arising from the progress in modern life sciences, from the expanding army of “do it yourself” or “garage” bio-engineers. Unfortunately, examples of most dangerous pathogens escape even from the most biosecurity sophisticated laboratories are known. So the life sciences progress also creates possibilities for intentional and/or deliberate misuse of dual-use materials, technologies and knowledge.

Given the rapid advances in Science and Technology we need to give more consideration to their implications for the Convention, and we continue to promote the idea of an Open Ended Working Group on Science and Technology that reports to an annual Meeting of States Parties that has the authority to make decisions.

Ukraine is ready to work with other States Parties to develop ideas for such an Open Ended Working Group on advances in Science and Technology.

At the conclusion of my statement, I would like to stress once again on Ukraine’s readiness to put every effort aimed at improving the BTWC regime in all its aspects as one of the fundamental pillars of the WMD non-proliferation.

Thank you for your attention.