Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The BioWeapons Prevention Project appreciates the opportunity for Non-Governmental Organizations to address this year’s Meeting of States Parties of the Biological Weapons Convention.

The BioWeapons Prevention Project, or “BWPP”, is a global network of civil society actors dedicated to permanently eliminating biological weapons and preventing the possibility that they will re-emerge. Launched in 2002, the BWPP now consists of more than 50 civil society organizations based in 17 countries, as well as several international civil society organizations. As such, the BWPP is the epitome of international cooperation. In addition to the work described by the BWPP members here today—such as VERTIC, the Universities of Hamburg and Bradford, the Scientists Working Group and Pax Christi—I would like to highlight some of the BWPP’s recent activities in support of the Convention which have been carried out by its member organizations. These activities demonstrate the constructive role that civil society partners can play, alongside States Parties, in achieving the goals of the BWC.

As many in this room will be aware, the BWPP has supported the writing and distribution of the Daily Reports of the BWC treaty meetings, commencing with the Sixth Review Conference. These reports were originally intended to inform our network members around the world, most of whom are not able to travel to Geneva, about the process and outcomes of these treaty meetings. However they have also proved extremely popular among the participating
delegations, who have found them useful for preparing their own meeting reports to capital, as well as the officials back in capitals themselves. Given their undoubted usefulness and relatively low cost of production, we trust that supportive governments might be in a position to provide contributory funding so that we can continue to provide these reports for future meetings and perhaps in a wider range of languages.

Another recent BWPP contribution relates to universalization of the Convention. At the Meeting of Experts in August this year, the BWPP released a report titled “Building a global ban: Why States have not joined the BWC”, which provides case studies on eighteen States that have not yet acceded to the BWC. We trust that States Parties will find this information useful in their efforts to achieve adherence to the Convention by these States. The report was kindly funded by the United Kingdom’s Strategic Programme Fund of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The BWPP also released the “BWPP Biological Weapons Reader” at this year’s Meeting of Experts. This document provides a wide range of technical and contextual information on the BWC and relevant issues for those who are new to these topics. The Reader is available on CD-rom and the BWPP website. It was kindly funded by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

BWPP welcomes the new NGO coalition in support of the CWC and its ban on the development and possession of chemical weapons established last week at the CWC Meeting of States Parties.

To conclude, there is a wealth of knowledge and expertise on BW issues within civil society organizations. Civil society organizations can play, and are playing, a vital role in supporting the norm against the weaponization of disease. NGOs greatly appreciate the recognition that the States Parties have granted to civil society and we urge the State Parties to continue this productive interaction in the run up to the Seventh Review Conference and beyond.