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# Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

13 December 2023

English only

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2023 Meeting  
Geneva, 11–13 December 2023

## Statement by Germany

### Submitted by Germany

Your Excellency,

Let me congratulate you, Ambassador Espinoza Canizares, on your election as the Chairperson of this Meeting of States Parties. My delegation assures you of our full support.

Germany aligns itself with the statement of the European Union, which will be delivered later during this meeting.

(1) The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) is one of the major pillars of the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. Germany remains strongly committed to upholding the legally-binding norm against the development, production, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons.

(2) Universalization of the prohibition of biological and toxin weapons is of utmost importance to ensure that biological agents and toxins will never be used as weapons. COVID-19 has shown how fast a disease can spread across borders and how dangerous and disruptive it can be. Only together, we can solve global problems and address challenges for biological security.

Therefore, we welcome South Sudan as the 185th State Party to the BTWC. We call upon those remaining twelve states that are not yet parties to the BTWC to ratify or accede to the Convention. Your voices and your contributions are needed. No state is redundant. We appeal upon you to make all efforts to overcome obstacles in joining our group.

We commend UNODA's and the Implementation Support Unit's valuable work for the promotion of universalization throughout this year and we are confident that it will bear fruits. We also commend the outreach of individual States Parties to states not parties to the BTWC.

(3) To do justice to the important role of the Convention, States Parties should pay their assessed contributions on time and in full. The ISU must remain capable to fulfil its responsibilities such as the provision of administrative support to our meetings, the promotion of universalization of the BTWC, the facilitation of Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs), the administration of an assistance databank and the organization of the Sponsorship Programme.

Germany has made the largest voluntary contribution to the Working Capital Fund, established in 2018. This fund can be used solely as a source of short-term financing pending receipt of reasonably anticipated contributions by States Parties.

We commend the considerable voluntary contributions made by members of the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction in support of the work of the ISU. Through Council Decisions, the European Union has provided more than 3 million euros for multi-year activities in support of the Convention in



2019, and more than 2 million euros for two-year activities for building resilience in biosafety and biosecurity through the BTWC in 2021.

(4) Germany welcomes the decision taken by the Ninth Review Conference to establish a Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention in all its aspects. We would like to express our gratitude for the wise stewardship of the Group's Chairperson, H. E. Ambassador Damico. We have seen constructive discussions and positive engagement by a large number of States Parties both at our meetings in August and last week.

Our gratitude also extends to the "Friends of the Chair," who have supported our work on the six topics that we have talked about so far.

(5) Discussions on the establishment of a Science and Technology Mechanism and an International Cooperation and Assistance Mechanism have advanced considerably and we are hopeful that these are not only achievable but within reach.

Acknowledging that while rapid developments in the life sciences and biotechnology offer new ways to fight diseases, they could also pose a potential risk for abuse to develop biological and toxin weapons. Therefore, a mechanism to assess scientific and technological developments relevant to the BTWC and provide States Parties with relevant advice is crucial.

Germany attaches great importance to the implementation of Article X of the BTWC. Under the German Biosecurity Programme we cooperate with partner countries in North Africa, the Sahel region, Southern and Southeast Europe, and Central Asia. Together with Nigeria and South Africa, Germany co-chairs the working groups "Surveillance and Epidemic Intelligence" and "Non-Proliferation" of the Global Partnership's "Africa Bio Signature Initiative."

(6) We have also addressed national implementation, confidence building and transparency as well as organizational, institutional and financial arrangements. China, Laos, South Africa and Uganda have shared their national implementation measures and best practices. The ISU has informed States Parties on its work on universalization and national implementation of the Convention in Africa, including legislative assistance provided to individual States Parties.

Confidence-building measures (CBM) and transparency contribute to building trust among States Parties. We were pleased to listen to a number of good proposals on how to foster confidence building and transparency. This year, the ISU has received a record number of 100 CBM reports for 2022. This means that fifty-four per cent of the States Parties to the BTWC have submitted their reports. We encourage all other States Parties to commit themselves to this politically binding task.

Germany welcomes the fact that, after 22 years, States Parties addressed compliance and verification for the first time again last week. We believe that a pertinent set of measures and instruments in this field has to reflect the specific character of biological and toxin weapons risks as well as the dual-use potential of sciences and new technologies. We are looking forward to working towards tailored measures for the BTWC that are politically achievable, technically sound and financially feasible.

Last but not least, Germany deplores Russia's reckless repetition of its bio-disinformation directed against the United States and Ukraine. In addition, we would like to remind Russia that Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk are and will always be integral parts of the sovereign state Ukraine.

We kindly request that this statement be designated an official document of this meeting and posted on UNODA's public website.