

## **Statement of Georgia**

### **Ninth Review Conference of the BWC**

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to join previous speakers and congratulate you Ambassador Bencini for your nomination as the President of the Ninth BWC Review Conference. I assure you of our full support and commitment to the success of this conference.

Georgia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. Additionally, I would like to add following remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. President,

Let me take this opportunity to reiterate Georgia's full solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's premeditated, unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, which grossly violates norms and principles of international law, the UN Charter, Helsinki Final Act and undermines international peace, security, stability and rules-based order.

Georgia reiterates its unwavering support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including Crimea and Donbas.

We are outraged that the threat of use of weapons of mass destruction and serious CBRN risks for the population and the environment have been evoked in the course of the Russian aggression, with the potential for catastrophic results.

It is alarming that, as part of its aggression against Ukraine, Russia has been engaged in a campaign of disinformation in spreading unsubstantiated claims against Ukraine and other countries including my own regarding the alleged development and possible use of biological

weapons. These attempts of Russia to justify its unlawful aggression are futile as the rest of its disinformation campaign. In this context, Russia on several occasions has spread disinformation regarding the functioning of the Richard Lugar Center in Georgia.

Georgia's relevant agencies have repeatedly commented on the status and functioning of the Richard Lugar Public Health Research Center, and together with the International community effectively rejected Russia's false accusations and rude attempts to diminish the role of successful institution contributing to the security of Georgia and throughout the entire region.

Dear Colleagues,

Georgia plays its essential role in supporting global security architecture by demonstrating its commitment to the international instruments and implementing their requirements at a national and International level. Georgia is a party to the all major arms control and disarmament treaties and regimes, which play important role in improving biosafety and biosecurity in the region.

National Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Council of Georgia with active involvement of EU, US and United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), the Government adopted the National CBRN Threat Reduction Strategy and action plan for 2021-2030.

We believe that the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) is one of the major pillars of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is a fundamental tool of the international architecture prohibiting biological weapons and every possible effort should be made to strengthen it and ensure its full and effective implementation. We are delighted that the membership of the Convention has increased in the last few years. However, the only international legal instrument dealing with biological disarmament and non-proliferation is not yet universal.

We agree that international cooperation and assistance are essential to support States Parties in their capacity building efforts, particularly in the domains of biosecurity and biosafety. In this context, we are proud of the fruitful cooperation with the US, Germany and other partners, which brought concrete, tangible results in terms of further enhancement of the biosafety and biosecurity in Georgia.

We praise Philippines efforts for developing Working Paper on Article X of the Convention. We are pleased, that Georgia together with Philippines, Finland and Norway will submit the document for consideration to the Review Conference.

Moreover, let me also highlight Georgia's support regarding the proposal of France on the establishment of an exchange platform for voluntary transparency exercises.

It is obvious that peer review mechanism serves as a transparency and confidence-building measure, as well as effective tool for quality control, a forum for sharing best practices and capacity building. It is vitally important to enhance support for the concept of a peer review mechanism and further explore its possibilities.

Georgia believes that this Conference represents a unique opportunity to strengthen the Convention and its implementation, to improve biosafety and biosecurity globally and to advance assistance, cooperation, response and preparedness of the States Parties.

Dear Colleagues,

Let me once again reiterate that Georgia is fully committed to its international obligations under the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons.

We hope that relevant steps will be taken in order to ensure successful Review Conference.

I thank you.