

HUNGARY

Statement by

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**Permanent Mission of Hungary to the UN and Other International
Organizations in Geneva**

**Hungary's general statement at the Ninth Review Conference of the BTWC
(28 November – 16 December 2022, Geneva)**

Geneva, 29 November 2022

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Mr. President,

Let me start by congratulating you, Ambassador Bencini, upon your election to serve as President of this Review Conference and by commending you for your efforts in preparation of this important meeting. You can count on our full support in your endeavours.

Hungary aligns itself with the statement of the European Union, therefore, I will only make a few remarks from our national perspective.

Mr. President,

Hungary is committed to support all instruments that aim at enhancing global security and achieving our goals in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is such an instrument and Hungary will do its utmost to achieve a successful outcome of the Ninth Review Conference.

The active role we play with regards to the BWC is a clear testament of our long-standing commitment to the advancement of the goals of the Convention through the proceedings of multiple intersessional cycles stretching from the Chairmanship of the Ad hoc Group back in the 90's to the Presidency of two Review Conferences including the last one held in 2016. In September this year we were also honoured to chair the Article 5 Formal Consultative Meeting of the State Parties held in Geneva. Moreover, my country is the sole sponsor of the annual BWC resolution in the United Nations General Assembly, which has always been adopted by consensus so far. We firmly believe that the adoption of this year's resolution yet again by consensus sends a positive signal to this Review Conference.

Mr. President,

The COVID-19 pandemic has refocused our attention to the risks related to the global spread of dangerous pathogens and the importance of strengthening the relevant instruments, such as the BWC, and their implementation. The pandemic has shown that we are not even prepared to effectively address naturally occurring diseases, let alone a situation when a biological agent is intentionally used as a weapon by states or by non-state actors. The rapid advances in science and technology have lowered the barriers for preparing biological weapons and non-state actors, as well as terrorists try to acquire and use them. Furthermore, even as it becomes easier to develop these weapons, it remains difficult to detect them, because almost any biological research can serve dual purposes and the equipment and technical knowledge used for legitimate purposes can be easily transformed to produce biological weapons.

Therefore, Hungary is also a strong supporter of the UN Secretary General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons (UNSGM), the only independent international instrument in this field. As a clear manifestation of our support, the Hungarian National Biosafety Laboratory (NSL) has been part of the roster of laboratories offered for the UNSGM since 2014.

All of these developments have generated not only growing interest in the Convention and in the RevCon but has increased expectations as well. To meet those high expectations we have to focus on those areas where consensus can be reached and translated into a progressive and comprehensive package.

The RevCon offers us a unique chance to reconfirm our commitment to the global norms and to the implementation of the Convention and to further the BWC in order to prevent harmful use of biological agents and promote their peaceful use. The mandate of the RevCon is clear and straightforward: it is to “review the operation of the Convention”. Thus, the article by article review of the implementation of the Convention is an important part of a comprehensive Final Document. However, the success of the RevCon will be evaluated in light of its decisions and recommendations. In our view one of the most important decisions should be the establishment of a Temporary Expert Working Group to consider specific measures to strengthen the Convention.

In this context I cannot but emphasize that this year when we mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Convention’s opening up for signature, States Parties should seize this opportunity to deliver a meaningful outcome that increases the efficiency of the BWC and enhances its relevance in a rapidly changing scientific and political environment. If we are not able to do so within the Convention, it will happen outside of it its framework. Therefore, the outcome of this Review Conference will be decisive in shaping the perspective of the Convention, a key pillar of international security.

Mr President,

In closing, allow me to assure you once again that Hungary has a strong interest in a successful Ninth Review Conference and will spare no effort to this effect.

Thank you.