

VERIFICATION RESEARCH, TRAINING AND INFORMATION CENTRE

Development House, 56–64 Leonard Street
London EC2A 4LT, United Kingdom

Tel +44 (0)20 7065 0880

Fax +44 (0)20 7065 0890

Website www.vertic.org

STATEMENT BY VERTIC TO THE 2014 MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE 1972 BIOLOGICAL AND TOXIN WEAPONS CONVENTION

Delivered by Yasemin Balci, Senior Legal Officer

Geneva, Switzerland

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Check against delivery

Mr Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The outbreak of Ebola in West Africa has highlighted the high toll that infectious diseases take and how crucial it is to detect and respond to these diseases on time. Establishing a legal framework to mitigate biorisk, ranging from implementing the International Health Regulations to the BWC is a crucial preventative measure, but this is not always given the priority it requires. Having a legal framework in place allows for coordination between the relevant entities, creates continuity between such entities, and allows for the mobilization of personnel and resources. We therefore encourage all States Parties to strengthen their legal frameworks.

Since the Meeting of Experts in August this year, VERTIC's National Implementation Measures Programme has continued to provide its legal services to interested States in order to implement their obligations under the BWC and the biological weapons-related requirements of UN Security Council Resolution 1540. We worked on BWC bills with Colombia in September and Mongolia in October, as part of the European Union's BWC Action. We also worked with another state in Asia on their BWC bill in late October, and as part of our project under the EU CBRN Centres of Excellence, with Cambodia and the Philippines on their BWC draft legislation in November. Later this week, we will be in Myanmar to continue the discussions we have been having for over a year on ratification and national implementation of the BWC.

We would be happy to discuss our legal services in detail with any interested State in the margins of this Meeting. We may be able to offer you first, a survey of your current legislation that is relevant for the BWC. Secondly, if you are already working on draft legislation, we would be able to review it. Finally, we are in a position to work with you on drafting a BWC bill from the start. The tools we have developed for this purpose, such as model laws and guidelines, are available on our website and on our CD, which is continuously updated and available on the table at the back of this room.

We are pleased to inform you that one of these tools, the "Legislative Guide to National Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540", was highlighted in a letter submitted by Canada and the United Kingdom, two of our funders, to the UN Secretary General and UN Security Council on 20 October. This Guide identifies and organizes in one document the model laws, implementation kits and handbooks that have already been developed by the IAEA, OPCW, VERTIC



and other legislative assistance providers to assist States in implementing the international legal instruments to prohibit and prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and related materials.

Mr Chair, we wish you a successful Meeting and would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr Daniel Feakes on his appointment as the Head of the BWC Implementation Support Unit.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Implementation Documents for the BWC and UN Security Council Resolution 1540 on VERTIC's NIM CD (available on the table outside the plenary room):

National Implementation:

- Sample Act for National Implementation of the BWC and UNSCR 1540 (*in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)
- Regulatory Guidelines for National Implementation of the BWC and UNSCR 1540 (*in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)
- International Committee of the Red Cross-VERTIC Model Law for the BWC (*in Arabic, English, Spanish*)

Accession to/Ratification of the BWC:

- Model Instrument of Accession (*in English, French, Portuguese, Spanish*)
- Model Instrument of Ratification (*in English, French, Spanish*)
- Contact details of the Depositaries (*in English*)

Background information:

- BWC text (*in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)
- Fact Sheet 7: National Implementation Measures for the BWC (*in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)
- Fact Sheet 10: National Authority for the BWC (*in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)
- BioWeapons Prevention Project Reader (*in English*)

- UNSCR 1540 text (*in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish*)
- Fact Sheet 6: National Implementation Measures for UNSCR 1540 (*in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)
- Legislative Guide to National Implementation of UNSCR 1540 (*in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)