

**STATEMENT BY VERTIC
TO THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE EIGHTH REVIEW CONFERENCE
OF THE 1972 BIOLOGICAL AND TOXIN WEAPONS CONVENTION**

Delivered by Scott Spence, Programme Director for National Implementation

Geneva, 8 August 2016

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

VERTIC welcomes the opportunity to speak once again to the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, and we underline our commitment to working with any government, from whatever region, that expresses interest in our services. VERTIC also extends our congratulations to you, Ambassador Molnár, as President-Designate of the Review Conference. We look forward to excellent co-operation with you alongside our ongoing engagement with the BWC Implementation Support Unit.

Mr Chairman, we continue to co-operate with non-States Parties to ratify or accede to the Biological Weapons Convention. The Marshall Islands was the first State to accede after the last Review Conference, becoming the 166th State Party in November 2012. Since then, an additional nine have joined for a total of 175 States Parties to date. This is a remarkable achievement and it has resulted from persistent, ongoing engagement with several non-States Parties. For example, VERTIC was honoured to co-organise a joint Portuguese-language workshop in April 2013 on accession to the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions with the Government of Angola, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the BWC Implementation Support Unit and the United Kingdom Embassy in Luanda. We were joined by experts from Brazil and the Portuguese Ministry of Defence. VERTIC warmly congratulates Angola for acceding to the CWC last September and to the BWC last month, which we believe was facilitated by the joint workshop and additional efforts thereafter. Mr Chairman, let us aim together, as the BWC community, to encourage the States Parties to the Eighth Review Conference to take a decision on reaching 190 States Parties by 2021. VERTIC pledges its continued support in this endeavour.

Mr Chairman, VERTIC continues to prioritise work related to the standing agenda item on national implementation. Our work in this area has particular resonance subsequent to the Open Consultations on UN Security Council Resolution 1540 in June. The participating UN Member States acknowledged that there is an urgent need for States to strengthen their legislative frameworks for biosecurity. I wish to highlight a few examples of how VERTIC is engaged in this very process, in co-operation with the BWC Implementation Support Unit, friendly States and other civil society actors. For example, we co-organised two workshops with Jamaica in April on the implementation of Financial Action Task Force Recommendation 7, which requires national measures to prevent proliferation financing, and on the implementation of the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions through the first step of preparing drafting instructions. We benefited from the participation of additional experts from Kingston University and the Center for International Trade and Security and observers from the 1540 Committee. VERTIC is deeply grateful to the Global Partnership Program of Global Affairs Canada, without whose financial support our ongoing work with Jamaica and several other Caribbean and Latin American nations would not be possible.

Mr Chairman, the West Africa Ebola crisis raised a number of questions about the strength and comprehensiveness of the legal and regulatory systems in place in the affected countries – primarily Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone – for emergency response and public health security. VERTIC, in co-operation with the

Global Emerging Pathogens Treatment Consortium and with funding from the Strategic Programme Fund of the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office, will be working with governments in West Africa to draft legislative measures for biosecurity later this year. We will report on the results during a side event at the Review Conference.

Mr Chairman, with funding from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, VERTIC will be submitting a report to the Review Conference on legislative implementation of the BWC based on the data we have been collecting and analysing for the past several years. In addition, inspired by the OPCW's Legislative Assistance Support Tool, we are developing an electronic platform which States can freely use to prepare draft legislation based on our *Sample Act* for implementation of the BWC. This tool will be available on the VERTIC website later this year.

In conclusion, let us aim together, as the BWC community, to encourage the States Parties to the Eighth Review Conference to take a firm decision on sustainable national implementation of the Convention. I hope that some of the activities that I have just described clearly demonstrate how such a commitment can be achieved.

Thank you Mr Chairman.

The following Implementation Documents for the BWC and related provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 are available at www.vertic.org > Programmes > National Implementation Measures > Biological Weapons and Materials > Legislative Drafting Tools > VERTIC: Compilation of CBRN National Implementation Documents (zip file) –

I. National Implementation:

- VERTIC: Sample Act for National Implementation of the BWC and UNSCR 1540 (*in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)
- VERTIC: Regulatory Guidelines for National Implementation of the BWC and UNSCR 1540 (*in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)
- ICRC-VERTIC: Model Law for the BWC (*in Arabic, English, Spanish*)
- VERTIC: Legislative Guide to National Implementation of UNSCR 1540 (*in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)

II. 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*)

III. Background information:

- Text of the BWC (*in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)
- VERTIC: Fact Sheet 7: National Implementation Measures for the BWC (*in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)
- VERTIC: Fact Sheet 10: National Authority for the BWC (*in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)
- BioWeapons Prevention Project Reader (*in English*)
- Text of UNSCR 1540 (*in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish*)
- VERTIC: Fact Sheet 6: National Implementation Measures for UNSCR 1540 (*in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)