

VERTIC Speech

Firstly, thank you Angela and her team for inviting us all to today's event in celebration of VERTIC's 25th anniversary. Since your organisation was established in 1986 it has gone from strength to strength in supporting the implementation and effectiveness of international agreements, such as the Biological & Toxin Weapons Convention. The United Kingdom is proud to have been able to associate itself with VERTIC's work by providing funding for its National Implementation Measures Programme over the past three years, to help VERTIC meet its objectives.

Through your programmes abroad many States continue to make considerable progress developing their legislative framework which in turn will help them meet their UNSCR 1540 obligations. In the last 25 years VERTIC has made a significant impact in many regions across the world. This year has seen VERTIC's small but efficient team produce some important results. VERTIC's work with States Parties to promote the universality of the BTWC contributed to Burundi and Mozambique joining the Convention this year.

Since the launch of the National Implementation Measures (NIM) Programme in 2008 and with only four members of staff, VERTIC has completed 130 country surveys, assessing existing legislation for national implementation of the BTWC, and has provided direct assistance to 23 States helping to draft the relevant legislation. Several of these are now being considered by a number of national assemblies. This achievement is something to be justly proud of.

VERTIC's reputation precedes them. By successfully developing tailored solutions to each State's particular requirements VERTIC is considered as the technical and professional partner in implementation. In addition, the depth and breadth of their partnership with other relevant regional organisations has ensured a very successful approach.

VERTIC has, like any NGO, faced considerable challenges in carrying out its work. There has been an increased demand from countries to work on omnibus legislation, covering 1540 legislation, for example, and VERTIC is responding by expanding the NIM Programme to cover CBRN legislative drafting. As States Parties to the BTWC, we all have a responsibility for promoting adherence to the Convention and its implementation. VERTIC welcomes cooperation from funders and other governments in advancing its work with countries, for which surveys have been completed, but which have not yet gained enough traction to move towards legislative development.

VERTIC, thank you again for all your continued hard work over the last 25 years and your contribution to the BTWC, We all wish you continuing success in the years to come and look forward to giving you our support wherever possible.