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Statement by VERTIC to the Preparatory Committee for the Ninth Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention

4-11 April, Geneva

Vice-Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

VERTIC thanks the States Parties to the BWC for the opportunity to speak today.

Vice-Chair, the norm against biological and toxin weapons is of utmost importance and must be upheld. The BWC is clear: never, in any circumstances, can States Parties engage with biological weapons. Fifty years since its opening for signature, the BWC remains central to efforts to prevent biological weapons and promote peaceful activities involving biological material. States Parties must abide by the obligations and mechanisms they have established under the BWC.

VERTIC has long supported the BWC through its work on national measures to implement the Convention, and on verification and compliance mechanisms. There is widespread recognition that bold efforts are now required in order to sustain the Convention. States Parties need to urgently consider and decide on means to strengthen the Convention, especially on necessary measures to facilitate the assurance of compliance. The upcoming Ninth Review Conference provides impetus for such a review. We stand ready to contribute our technical and impartial expertise to such efforts.

Vice-Chair, the PrepCom meets against the background of public allegations of non-compliance with the BWC in the context of the conflict and humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. We underscore the availability of the processes under Articles V and VI of the Convention to address credible and substantiated allegations of non-compliance, in order to uphold the Convention. We support the statement to this effect of the [High Representative for](#)

[Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu to members of the United Nations Security Council on 11 March 2022.](#)

Regarding national implementation of the BWC, VERTIC continues to provide legislative assistance to states around the globe under a number of projects and in collaboration with partners. We are grateful for funding support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union, and the United States Department of State with CRDF Global. This funding enables us to respond to States' requests for legislative assistance and update our freely available legislative tools. Our ongoing legislative assistance efforts, like those of other assistance providers, contribute to the application and enforcement of the Convention by its States Parties.

In addition, VERTIC works towards universalisation of the Convention. Since the Eighth Review Conference, five states have become States Parties to the Convention. VERTIC pledges its continued support and assistance in States' ratification or accession efforts. We encourage States Parties to take concrete measures at the Ninth Review Conference to support the universalisation of the Convention.

We look forward to continuing our engagement with all stakeholders, including States, civil society partners, and the Implementation Support Unit to strengthen the BWC.

Thank you, Vice-Chair.