



Permanent Representation
of the Federal Republic of Germany
to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva

National Statement

by

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**SECOND MEETING OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE EIGHTH BTWC
REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Mr Chairman,

Once again, I would like to assure you of the full support of my delegation. As Vice-Chair, I stand ready to support you in the run up to the Eighth Review Conference and I am convinced that all of us will make the best possible use of this year's opportunity to reflect and agree upon ways and means to make the Convention work.

Germany attaches great importance to the Convention its further enhancement and its universalization. Therefore, I would like to warmly welcome our two newest member states to the Convention – the Republic of Angola and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. Germany and Côte d'Ivoire have worked together closely under the framework of the German Partnership Program for Excellence in Biological and Health Security in the wake of the Ebola crisis in 2014 and 2015. Côte d'Ivoire's accession is an important step towards universalization of the Convention. However, until we reach this goal, work remains to be done – as of today, 13 states have neither signed nor ratified the BTWC. Even so, we are optimistic that, by November this year, this number will be smaller – also because of the ongoing effort of member states in promoting this Convention.

Mr. Chairman, Germany associates itself with the Statement delivered on behalf of the European

Union. I would also like to refer to my first statement at the Preparatory Committee in April. Nonetheless, I would like to make a few quick points of importance to the German delegation.

In the wake of global terrorism, standstill is not an option for the BTWC-process. An abuse of biological substances for terrorist purposes cannot be excluded, and the international community must be prepared to deal with such incidents. Therefore, it is our duty to use the full potential of the BTWC as a meaningful security policy instrument, which can only be achieved if day-to-day operations of the BTWC correspond to the noble goals it represents. The agreements we reach in November will determine the time, effort and resources we all dedicate to non-proliferation of biological weapons and its potential substances in the coming five years. Time and resources are precious, so let's make it count!

We are all aware that the existing structures and institutions require innovation and reinforcement, as they do lack timely and effective operational and decision-making procedures. Without an appropriate and carefully defined degree of decision-making authority for the MSP, we will not be able to foster a more effective implementation of the Convention over the next five years. Likewise, the intersessional process must be made more focused and operational. We also need to ensure that the ISU's mandate, resources and staffing correspond appropriately to any decision we all might wish to agree upon for the intersessional period.

In order to keep up with rapid developments in life sciences, input of expertise is vital for the functioning of the convention. In our view, the annual meeting of experts should be adapted into a format that is capable of reacting to rapid and complex developments in life sciences in order to make useful recommendations to State Parties. In order to make well-informed policy choices, a thorough and focused science and technology review conducted by scientific experts is crucial. Many States Parties have already submitted helpful proposals relating to science and technology and its relevance to the Convention. We are optimistic that we are now in a good place to build a foundation for a more effective handling of expertise, which will then hopefully be reflected in the final declaration of the 8th Review Conference.

Strengthening the UNSGM is also crucial in order to raise the relevance of the BTWC as a meaningful security policy instrument. In order to be able to react rapidly and efficiently in case of a violation of the BTWC as stated in Article VI of the Convention, the UNSGM is the only effective mechanism in the framework of the Convention today. To make use of the whole potential of the UNSGM, we need close cooperation among laboratories and specialists as well as efforts to improve the exchange of best practices and lessons learned. In our view, UNODA is in the best position to steer and coordinate UNSGM activities, but it requires adequate resources to do so. It is

our joint responsibility to reach an agreement for a more effective use of the UNSGM.

As we do not yet have a verification mechanism, we depend on alternative ways of demonstrating compliance. All states parties agreed on submitting CBMs in 1986, and both ISU and States Parties have offered assistance related to the CBM process, but it is not a secret that the submission rate remains below the states parties political commitments and therefore our expectations. It is now pivotal to engage in an open dialogue in order to find out how implementation of this provision of the Convention could be enhanced. In this regard, the efforts of all member states are required.

As many of you may know, Germany has just conducted its first Peer Review Compliance Visit Exercise at the military Institute of Microbiology in Munich last week. We received positive feedback from participants from twenty different countries of all regional groups, and I believe this exercise was a beneficial opportunity for all of us to expand our horizon on what transparency measures can entail. If implementation of the BTWC is carried out in a transparent manner, it can contribute to enhancing confidence in States Parties' compliance with and commitment to the BTWC. Therefore, we hope that this event will encourage other States Parties to conduct similar exercises and continue the work of France, Benelux countries, the European Union, Germany and others. With the aim to share insights we gained from conducting this event, we are also happy to announce that the German delegation will be hosting a side event during the Eighth Review Conference presenting structure, contents, and lessons identified of our peer review exercise in Munich.

Finally, I would like to seize this opportunity to thank the ISU, namely Mr. Feakes and Mr. Lampalzer, for all their diligent and hard work. This is not a small job to be done by only two people and we really appreciate your effort both in administrative, organisational and documentation procedures. Without you, BTWC-related processes would not be running as smoothly as they do, so thank you very much!

Let me conclude by saying that Germany is highly committed to improving the implementation of the Convention and is looking forward to constructive dialogue on all issue areas. I firmly believe that close cooperation, a frank and constructive exchange of views and a spirit of compromise will enable us to take this very important Convention forward.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.