



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden

Statement by H. E. Ms Anna Jardfelt
Mission of Sweden to the United Nations in Geneva

**2020 Meeting of States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention
22 November 2021**

Mr. Chair,

Sweden is fully aligned with the statement by the European Union. I would like to make a few additional remarks in a national capacity.

First let me welcome your appointment as the chair of this Meeting of States Parties and assure you of the full support of my delegation for your efforts towards a successful outcome.

Let me also express Sweden's appreciation for the work of the Implementation Support Unit.

Mr. Chair,

The BTWC constitutes a central part of the global norm against biological weapons, which is imperative to international security. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the severe consequences a biological weapons attack could have on society. The Convention plays a crucial role in preventing these risks from becoming reality. All State Parties to the Convention carry a shared responsibility to prevent the misuse of science and technology by any state or non-state actor.

Synergies between the BTWC and other relevant instruments and mechanisms can further reinforce the global norm against the use of biological weapons. The Secretary General's Mechanism is indispensable for the international community's ability to deal with allegations of use of biological and chemical weapons. With the aim to increase the level of preparedness for laboratory participation in possible future UN investigations of alleged use of biological weapons, the Swedish Defence Research Agency, together with the Robert Koch Institute in Germany and the Technical University of Denmark, is coordinating two quality assurance genome analysis exercises in September 2021 and in May 2022. The first exercise saw participation from 40 laboratories from 25 countries representing six regions. Both exercises

are funded by the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance within the US Department of State.

Sweden welcomes all the work conducted over the past years in order to ensure the continued operational readiness of the Secretary General's mechanism.

Mr. Chair,

The financial situation for the BTWC remains unstable. This undermines our common goal to ensure the implementation and universalisation of the Convention. Predictable and sufficient funding is essential, and Sweden urges all State Parties to fully comply with their financial obligations under the Convention.

Mr. Chair,

It is Sweden's firm conviction that a gender equality perspective on all aspects of our collective work will strengthen international peace and security. Sweden encourages all state parties to adopt a gender perspective in the context of the BTWC and on disarmament in general.

A final point - the Meetings of Experts continue to constitute a central part of the intersessional process in the run-up to the Ninth Review Conference in 2022. We would like to see proposals put forward in the Meetings of Experts, where there is general agreement among States Parties, to be reflected in the report from this meeting. This would strengthen our ability to work in a focused way in the period leading up to next year's Review Conference.

We hope this meeting can establish that progress has been made in finding broad agreement on the establishment of a science and technology review arrangement, even though more discussion may be needed to settle the details.

With these words I conclude, and wish us all a productive meeting

Thank you, Mr. Chair.