Statement by the delegation of Lithuania at the Meeting of States Parties of the Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons Convention, Geneva, 22-25 November 2021

Agenda Item 5: General Debate

Mr. Chair,

The delegation of Lithuania would like to extend its thanks and appreciation to you, Ambassador Mailu, for your leadership and dedication to the Biological Weapons Convention. We would like to assure you of our full support and cooperation.

Lithuania aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and would like to add the following brief remarks in its national capacity.

Availing of this opportunity we wish to reaffirm our attachment and firm commitment to the global norm against biological weapons and reiterate our support for the efficient functioning and enhanced implementation of the BTWC. We also retain our interest in the universalization of this important Convention and wish to thank the Chair and everyone involved for promoting it during this challenging period.

For the past 20 months and up to this day the Covid-19 pandemic has been affecting the work of the Convention. These are difficult times for international cooperation and multilateral diplomacy. At the same time the activities of the BTWC were maintained and adapted to the new circumstances. In this regard, the determination and creativity by all MX Chairs and by the Implementation Support Unit must be recognized with distinct gratitude. The on-line webinars were extremely useful and they paved the way for the Meetings of Experts, which in turn prepared and informed our discussions at this Meeting of States Parties. With a view of ensuring a seamless transition from this intersessional cycle to the next BTWC Review process and promoting the consideration of matters of substance it would be important, as a first step, to endorse the MX summary reports.

Mr. Chair,

In the run-up to the Ninth Review Conference we regularly ask ourselves how can we improve the functioning of the BTWC, what can we do better? We might consider the following broad avenues for action, which include but are not limited to:

- maintaining robust and meaningful discussions on various proposals of substance, making honest attempts to bridge minor gaps that still exist on those decisions that have best chances for consensus;
- building upon the relative success towards greater transparency, on the record amount of annual reports on Confidence Building Measures; trying to accomplish more in this domain in inclusive and cooperative manner, employing more readily and broadly relevant voluntary initiatives that promote transparency and confidence-building;
- agreeing on practical measures to strengthen the role of the Implementation Support Unit;
- and last but not least, it is imperative for all States Parties to respect their financial obligations to the BTWC: to pay their assessed contributions on time and in full, and for those States in arrears to pay their dues without delay.

Mr. Chair, it has been my honor and privilege to cooperate within the Bureau of the BTWC for the past two years. I am looking forward to successful outcomes of this Meeting of States Parties and to a smooth start to the Review process of the Convention.