

Chair, excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today on behalf of Biosecure Ltd. This meeting is crucial in setting the tone and agenda for the upcoming ninth Review Conference. Time is a precious commodity and there is much work to be done to identify the necessary common ground upon which progress at the Review Conference might be constructed. Biosecure urges you to steadfastly remain focused on the substantive issues critical to the future health of the Convention.

Biosecure wishes to highlight some of the areas in which substantive progress is urgently needed:

1. **Take action to ensure the BWC has a suitable process for reviewing developments in science and technology:** modern biotechnology continues to challenge the convention. The BWC must have effective means to receive sound advice regarding developments in relevant science and technology, their implications, and possible actions that States Parties may need to take. It is also important for the BWC to re-establish industry engagement in the BWC is an area that is ripe for further development.
2. **Expansion of the Article I prohibition against using bioweapons to harm humans, animals and plants to include the bioeconomy:** biology as a manufacturing technology is now part of a country's critical national infrastructure. Given the biological nature of these processes, it is increasingly feasible that they may be deliberately disrupted using biological agents. The international scientific community has warned of precisely this risk and encouraged states parties how this might affect the BWC. It is time to make a clear statement that using biology to disrupt the bioeconomy would be contrary to the aims and objectives of the BWC. Adding a small clause to this effect into the final declaration associated with Article I would have a profound impact in future-proofing the regime and helping keep pace with the emerging risk environment.
3. **Find a way to address issues around compliance with the Convention:** to be effective every State Party must be reassured that the others are living up to their obligations. The current arrangements to provide this reassurance are sub-optimal. Past efforts to make incremental progress have not yielded the anticipated results. A more systematic and structured exploration on increasing confidence in compliance with the treaty can be enhanced is overdue.
4. **Expanding capacity building and furthering the central role that education of scientists and engineers plays in the work of the BWC:** States Parties have reached common understandings on *what* scientists and engineers need to know, *how* best this may be accomplished, and *who* needs to be involved. Despite this clear roadmap, few of our scientists and engineers receive training they need. With the kind support of the UK government, Biosecure has developed a free online biosecurity training course designed as an introduction to biosecurity for all those with a stake in preventing the malign misuse of biology that has so far helped train over four and half thousand learners. We stand ready to assist all States Parties in their efforts to continue to educate, train and raise awareness of biosecurity issues and biorisk management strategies. We also wish to draw your attention to efforts from within the scientific and engineering communities to create and support biosecurity career paths and on-ramps that would create a sustainable pool of capable and engaged professionals to combat the risks posed by the deliberate and accidental misuse of biology.
5. **Increasing diversity and inclusivity in dialogue on the BWC:** efforts are needed to continue to increase gender, geographic and youth perspectives in the Biological Weapons Convention. We gladly acknowledge previous efforts by the ISU and others to increase geographic diversity and gender perspectives within the BWC, but wish to again emphasize UN Secretary-General Guterres' appreciation that today's youth have a critical and transformational role to play in the future direction of disarmament. Biosecure encourages

mainstreaming youth participation in all deliberations through youth quotas in the respective delegations and representation of youth bodies such as young science academies. We issue a Call to Action for the BWC, UNODA, State Parties and other stakeholders to continue to support initiatives to educate, empower and enable youth to take an active and effective role in biological disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for this opportunity to address this meeting. The non-governmental community plays a key role in the day-to-day life of this treaty. Biosecure stands ready to assist States Parties in carrying forward its efforts to ensure that the benefits from biotechnology are maximized whilst managing any associated risks.

Thank you.