Background information document on compliance by Finland with all its obligations under the BTWC

A. General remarks

Finland attaches great importance to effective implementation of the BTWC and is in compliance with all the provisions of the Convention.

B. In detail

Article I and II

Finland has never developed, produced, stockpiled, otherwise acquired or retained microbial or other biological agents, or toxins of types or in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes. Neither has Finland ever developed, produced, stockpiled or otherwise acquired or retained weapons, equipment or means of delivery designed to such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.

Article III

Finland's national report to the UNSC 1540 Committee (submitted on 28 October 2004 and amended 2005, 2006, 2007, 2011 and 2019) contains information on Finland's efforts to prevent transfers of prohibited agents and equipment. Finland is committed to providing assistance to other States for fulfilling the provisions of the resolution 1540.

Article IV

Finland's legislation on biological weapons is based on the Biological Weapons Act 257/1975 and Decree 258/1975. Corresponding penal provisions have been included in the Penal Code and in its amendments. The amended Code criminalizes the use, development, preparation, procurement, storage, possession, transport and delivery of biological weapons or related equipment. A comprehensive chapter on terrorist offences was also added to the Penal Code in 2003 and since then this chapter has been amended on the basis of new relevant international obligations. It should be noted that other parts of legislation, e.g. the Firearms Act and the Communicable Diseases Act contain provisions that can also relate to biological weapon and related material. Furthermore, concerning national mechanisms to establish and maintain the security and oversight of pathogenic micro-organisms and toxins, Finland is currently considering the need to revise its related legislation.

Article V

Finland has participated annually in the information exchange through the Confidence Building Measures (CBM). The 2022 submission has been posted on the Internet site of the United Nations Office at Geneva (https://bwc-ecbm.unog.ch/state/finland). As a Member State of the European Union, Finland is committed to the EU BTWC Action Plan of 2019 concerning creation or enhancement of national
mechanisms for the compilation of the required information and for the annual submissions of CBMs including; increasing the number of States Parties participating in the CBM exchange, enhancing the quality of the information submitted, and increasing the number of States Parties submitting their CBM returns electronically.

Article VI

To reflect the understandings of the 2003 Meeting of States Parties on enhancing international capabilities for responding to, investigating and mitigating the effects of cases of alleged use of biological or toxin weapons or suspicious outbreaks of disease, Finland has updated the list of Finnish expert consultants, qualified experts and analytical laboratories, which may be used by the UN Secretary-General for the purposes of investigations of the reports of use of chemical and biological weapons. The latest update was submitted in February 2022. As a Member State of the European Union, Finland is also committed to the EU BTWC Action Plan of 2019, which supports strengthening the United Nations Secretary-General's Mechanism for investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical, Biological and Toxin Weapons (UNSGM). Finnish expert consultants, qualified experts and analytical laboratories have participated in the UNSGM onboarding sessions, exercises, and trainings.

Article VII

See separate background information document submitted by Finland on the Implementation of Article VII.

Article VIII and IX

Finland is a State Party to the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, signed at Geneva on 17 June 1925 and to the Chemical Weapons Convention and fully recognizes the obligations under the Geneva Protocol and the objective of effective prohibition of chemical weapons as requested in Articles VIII and IX of the Convention.

Article X

See separate background information document submitted by Finland on the Implementation of Article VII.

Article XI

Finland has not tabled any proposals to amend the text of the Convention.

Article XII

Finland actively participates in Review Conferences and Meetings related to the Convention.
Article XIV

Finland shares the view of the European Union and the G7 Global Partnership that universal adherence to the Convention is crucial. Finland is therefore actively promoting accession to the BTWC both bilaterally and at EU level (see EU Council Decision 2019/97/CSFP in support of the BTWC).