



The Preparatory Committee for the 9th Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention

Statement on behalf of the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security Delivered by Dr. Gigi Kwik Gronvall, April 4, 2022

Greetings to the distinguished Chair, Delegates, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the 9th Preparatory Committee.

As the biological sciences advance, it is critical that scientists and other stakeholders are aware of the biosecurity implications of their work and how their work can contribute to nonproliferation. Despite many steps by the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) to increase this awareness, gaps persist. *The Tianjin Biosecurity Guidelines for Codes of Conduct for Scientists* were developed to promote the responsible conduct of research, ensure the broadest use of science for beneficent purposes, and serve as a concrete touchstone for scientists and other stakeholders engaged in the life sciences and related fields. The guidelines establish guiding principles designed to promote responsible science and strengthen biosecurity governance at the national and institutional levels. Practitioners and policymakers can also use the guidelines to develop, enhance, supplement, or update their own codes of conduct adaptive to specific contexts and responsive to evolving biorisks arising from rapid advances in biological sciences.

We urge States Parties to welcome the Tianjin Biosecurity Guidelines at the 9th Review Conference and consider mechanisms to raise awareness of them among global stakeholders, from national policymakers to frontline scientists. Formal acknowledgement of the Tianjin Biosecurity Guidelines would signal the importance of these topics and encourage all States Parties to recommit to domestic efforts to reduce risks associated with advanced life science research and technology development. The Interacademy Partnership and China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs will host a side event on the development and dissemination of the Tianjin Biosecurity Guidelines on Wednesday, April 6 at noon CET. International experts who informed development of the guidelines will discuss how they provide a necessary foundation for the future of biosecurity governance.

We further encourage States Parties to think critically about their goals for the upcoming 9th Review Conference, including what they hope to gain from the BWC. The treaty offers a broad scope of benefit, from bioweapons nonproliferation to international cooperation and assistance. Debate on core BWC issues, including verification and compliance assessment, have been mired in fundamental disagreements regarding the scope and purpose of those capacities. States Parties should think beyond these terms and identify their respective purposes to identify mechanisms that increase assurance regarding States Parties' compliance with their treaty obligations. We encourage States Parties to include debate on key BWC terminology, such as "verification" and "compliance," during the next Intersessional Programme, with the aim of coalescing around

common definitions to facilitate future negotiations on these important concepts. We address these issues in further detail in a preprint manuscript titled "[BWC Assurance: Increasing Certainty in BWC Compliance](#)."

Thank you again to the Chair and delegates, for the opportunity to address the Preparatory Committee. We wish you a very productive meeting.