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STATEMENT BY VERTIC TO THE 2015 MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE 1972 BIOLOGICAL AND TOXIN WEAPONS CONVENTION

Delivered by Scott Spence, Programme Director for National Implementation

Geneva, 14 December 2015

Mr Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Biological Weapons Convention has often been described as a network of networks involving States; the health, customs, judicial and agricultural sectors; international organisations; as well as civil society organisations, academic and professional institutions and industry. A look around the room today confirms that this network of networks approach remains an integral and valuable component of the operation of the Convention. VERTIC calls upon the States Parties to maintain this open, welcoming and productive environment through the Eighth Review Conference and beyond.

Mr Chair, I will briefly discuss how VERTIC's National Implementation Programme continues to contribute to and expand the network approach, drawing on activities we have been involved with since the Meeting of Experts in August. Firstly, we have completed an additional number of BWC legislation surveys for countries in Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America and South Asia for a total of 143 since our Programme began in 2008. The data in our collection will serve as the basis for a report we will be preparing for the Eighth Review Conference on how much has been achieved under the standing agenda item on national implementation since the last Review Conference in 2011.

Secondly, we have continued to co-operate with the BWC Implementation Support Unit, friendly States and other civil society actors to advance universality of the Convention. The ISU and VERTIC met with Guinea's presidential envoy at the Meeting of Experts in August to discuss that country's accession to the BWC. We were pleased to hear that Guinea has the political will to join and there is now concrete understanding of how the accession process works. We then joined a number of African States, international organisations and civil society actors at the IGAD Workshop for States on Enhancing Implementation of Resolution 1540 and Other Non-proliferation Instruments, which took place in Nairobi in September. This was an excellent opportunity for the BWC network of networks to engage with Eritrea and South Sudan regarding their efforts to join the Convention. Shortly thereafter, we participated in a first ever workshop for Africa hosted by the African Union and the ISU on universality and implementation of the BWC, which took place in Addis Ababa in late October. The African Union, ISU and VERTIC publicly lent their support towards efforts by Angola, South Sudan and Tanzania to join the Convention. We learned that Angola's parliament has passed a bill to join the BWC and that the remaining step is for the President to deposit an instrument of accession. We call on Angola's neighbours and other friendly States to encourage President dos Santos to complete the procedure as quickly as possible so that Angola may participate in the Eighth Review Conference as a State Party and demonstrate its unqualified support for the Convention and its objectives.

Thirdly, we have worked with the BWC ISU, friendly States and other civil society actors to advance the standing agenda item on national implementation. In October and November, VERTIC co-operated with Senegal and Bangladesh to draft legislation to implement the Convention. We were joined at the Bangladesh workshop by staff from the International Committee of the Red Cross, which underlines the value of co-operative efforts



based on the network of networks approach. We are now extending our co-operation to Parliamentarians for Global Action and had the honour to participate in and speak at their 37th Annual Forum in El Salvador two weeks ago, which focused on universality and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and the BWC. We were pleased to learn there that Nepal is re-engaged with the process of joining the Convention now that reconstruction is well underway after last year's devastating earthquake. VERTIC also intends to continue its excellent co-operation with the Pacific Forum. Just last week we joined their 3rd non-proliferation dialogue among Myanma, UK and US officials, along with experts from the International Institute for Strategic Studies and Kings College London. Myanmar is already making great strides in their implementation of the BWC in the year since they have joined, and this is certain to accelerate under their newly elected government.

Mr Chair, I will conclude my remarks by expressing our deep gratitude to our past and current funders – the Governments of Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as the European Union. Without their invaluable support, the work of VERTIC's National Implementation Programme, such as the activities I have described today, would not be possible.

Thank you Mr Chair.

The following Implementation Documents for the BWC and related provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 are available –

- on VERTIC's NIM Programme CD (copies on the table outside the plenary room)
- at www.vertic.org > Programmes > National Implementation Measures > Biological Weapons and Materials > Legislative Drafting Tools > VERTIC: Compilation of CBRN National Implementation Documents (zip file) –

I. National Implementation:

- VERTIC: Sample Act for National Implementation of the BWC and UNSCR 1540 (*in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)
- VERTIC: Regulatory Guidelines for National Implementation of the BWC and UNSCR 1540 (*in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)
- ICRC-VERTIC: Model Law for the BWC (*in Arabic, English, Spanish*)
- VERTIC: Legislative Guide to National Implementation of UNSCR 1540 (*in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)

II. Accession to/Ratification of the BWC:

- Model Instrument of Accession (*in English, French, Portuguese, Spanish*)
- Model Instrument of Ratification (*in English, French, Spanish*)
- Contact details of the Depositaries (*in English*)

III. Background information:

- Text of the BWC (*in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)
- VERTIC: Fact Sheet 7: National Implementation Measures for the BWC (*in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)
- VERTIC: Fact Sheet 10: National Authority for the BWC (*in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)
- BioWeapons Prevention Project Reader (*in English*)
- Text of UNSCR 1540 (*in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish*)
- VERTIC: Fact Sheet 6: National Implementation Measures for UNSCR 1540 (*in Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish*)