



## Statement by the Biochemical Security 2030 Project, University of Bath to the Meeting of States Parties (2014) to the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapon Convention

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Representatives,

It is a great honour to have the opportunity to contribute to this meeting. I am speaking today on behalf of the Biochemical Security 2030 project. This project is led by Professor David Galbreath from the University of Bath.<sup>i</sup>

Mr. Chairman,

Last month, our project held a three-day event entitled '*Biological and Chemical Security in an Age of Responsible Innovation*'.<sup>ii</sup> This meeting brought together a range of experts to discuss how responsible innovation could be fostered at an international, national and local level. A full report of this meeting will be made available on our project website.<sup>iii</sup>

Today, I wish to draw attention to some key ideas which were discussed at this meeting, which also build upon our work over the previous 18 months.

**At the international level**, it is apparent that States Parties need to draw upon experiences during the current Inter-sessional Process in order to consider how States Parties can ensure that science and technology review is more *action orientated* during future Inter-sessional Processes. In particular, I would like to draw attention to a recent publication from our project by Dr Catherine Rhodes<sup>iv</sup>, which outlines potential lessons for the BTWC from other international organisations in relation to science and technology review. This paper, as well as a series of other papers, are focused on the current needs of the biological and chemical weapons conventions and are available on our website.<sup>v</sup>

**At the national level**, it is clear that, where addressed, states have developed a variety of strategies to deal with biosecurity challenges emerging from cutting edge science and technology. Any successful process of S&T review at the international level should help foster the sharing of information, national level experiences and good practice in the area of science and technology assessment. I would also like to take this opportunity to draw attention to the recent in depth report produced by the German Ethics Council, entitled '*Biosecurity — Freedom and Responsibility of Research*' which may stimulate thinking for others.

Finally, **at local level**, our meeting identified universities as a potential starting point for those seeking to foster a culture of responsibility within the life sciences in national contexts. Universities are not only producers of research and scientists, but can also act as responsible consumers of cutting edge biotechnologies and other products used as part of research (such as synthetic DNA). As responsible consumers, universities can potentially exert a positive influence on some aspects of industry. We also found that further education and outreach were needed in order to engage the relevant scientific, industry and professional communities, including biological safety professionals.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Professor David Galbreath,

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Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014

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<sup>ii</sup> This event was held at The Royal Society, London. The event took place 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> November 2014.

<sup>iii</sup> [www.biochemsec2030.org](http://www.biochemsec2030.org)

<sup>iv</sup> Rhodes, C (2014) BTWC: Learning from Alternative Models of Science and Technology Review, Biochemical Security 2030 Policy Paper Series, No. 8, University of Bath. Available online, <http://biochemsec2030.org/policy-outputs/>

<sup>v</sup> For further information on discussions of S&T review processes in the run up to the Seventh Review Conference please see: <http://hsp.sussex.ac.uk/sandreviews/> as well as Alexander Kelle, Malcolm R Dando, and Kathryn Nixdorff, *S&T in the Third BWC Inter-Sessional Process: Conceptual Considerations and the 2012 ISP Meetings*. (University of Bradford: Bradford Disarmament Research Unit, 2013), [http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/sbtwc/ST\\_Reports/ST\\_Reports.htm](http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/sbtwc/ST_Reports/ST_Reports.htm). A number of relevant papers are also available on the UN BWC website at [http://www.unog.ch/\\_\\_80256ee600585943.nsf/%28httpPages%29/f1cd974a1fde4794c125731a0037d96d?OpenDocument&ExpandSection=2#\\_Section2](http://www.unog.ch/__80256ee600585943.nsf/%28httpPages%29/f1cd974a1fde4794c125731a0037d96d?OpenDocument&ExpandSection=2#_Section2)