

Opening Remarks
International Conference on Health and Security
Washington DC
September 5, 2012
Ambassador Laura Kennedy

- Welcome to the International Conference on Health and Security. I am Laura Kennedy, U.S. Special Representative for Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention Issues. I moonlight as the US Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.
- I am delighted that our distinguished audience includes experts from around the world as well as simple diplomats like me. It is a special pleasure to welcome my colleagues from Geneva among whom is Ambassador Van den IJssel who so tirelessly and effectively served as the President of the seventh Review Conference of the BWC .
- Those of you here today who also attended that Review Conference in Geneva last December will recall that Secretary of State Clinton addressed that gathering. In her statement, she called on all states to seek to bolster international confidence that countries are carrying out their BWC obligations.
- She highlighted the value of transparency. While noting the importance of the annual reporting that BWC member states are called on to do, she also suggested that states can unilaterally seek ways to demonstrate transparency. This conference is part of that Bio-Transparency and Openness Initiative.
- This conference is also very directly aimed at that nexus between health and security that is vital to our global efforts to deter, detect and deal with disease outbreaks whether they are the result of a deliberate attack, natural occurring or accidental. It is all about making and reinforcing connections among different communities within and across national boundaries. It is all about synergies among different organizations without duplicating work or overstepping boundaries. In that connection, let me also say what a particular pleasure it is to welcome colleagues from Geneva who are representing two hometown organizations, the WHO and the BWC ISU.
- The ever-growing need for collaboration to confront 21st century challenges underscores why we invited a range of diplomats, arms control and non-proliferation experts, scientists, representatives of industry, public health and law enforcement to discuss how we can support the ongoing revolution in the life sciences and ensure that scientific discoveries and applications are used solely for peaceful and beneficial purposes. We hope that together we can reduce the risk that life sciences will be misused to cause deliberate or inadvertent release of biological material in a manner that sickens or kills people, animals, or plants, or renders unusable critical resources.
- We are very pleased that you are here; your participation will help build partnerships and increase the effectiveness of cooperation and collaboration among and within our

countries as we work together to protect the world from the threat of biological weapons and proactively deal with disease.

- We have an impressive slate of speakers over the next two days who will share their ideas on “Building Partnerships for Biological Threat Prevention, Preparedness, and Response.”
- This conference also signifies the launch of the International Biosecurity and Prevention Forum (IBPF), a unique initiative designed to facilitate communication among experts from the health and security communities with new tools to share experience and expertise on biosecurity and bioterrorism prevention.
- As Secretary Clinton noted last December, making the world safe from bioweapons “*starts with open conversations*” among countries. We hope you find the information from panelists frank and informative. We equally hope to learn from all of you over the next two days about the challenges confronting all of us and strategies to make the world a healthier and safer place. We aim to supplement and contribute to the ongoing BWC forum in Geneva.
- I am delighted to introduce my friend and colleague, Lynn Rusten, Senior Advisor on the National Security Staff of the White House, who will give our opening address. She will be followed by another good friend and colleague, our new Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, Greg Delawie. And I very much look forward to the presentation at this opening session by FBI Assistant Director John Perren. I thank them all for taking the time to join us here today.