Mr. Chairman, given the importance of the Review Conference to strengthening the BWC and the need to prepare effectively for it, this is a critical agenda item for our meeting this week.

My Delegation appreciates your efforts and those of the Implementation Support Unit to prepare Parties for taking decisions on arrangements for the Ninth RevCon and its PrepComs, as well as the preliminary cost estimates provided by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA).

This Meeting needs to take three related decisions regarding the Review Conference – those on venue, timing, and duration.

Given the obvious cost advantages to holding the Conference in United Nations facilities, as well as our history of holding BWC meetings here, it is clear that the best choice for the venue is the Palais des Nations.

And since the United Nations Strategic Heritage Plan’s renovation of the Palais des Nations constrains the dates on which we can meet, it is evident that the Conference should take place in November of 2021.

Both of these choices are foreseen in the UNODA cost estimates. We support them and believe that other States Parties will do the same.

However, it appears that Parties disagree on the third of these decisions – the duration of the Review Conference. The United States believes strongly that the Conference can effectively complete its work in two weeks.

We note that the UNODA cost estimates also foresee two Preparatory Committee meetings of two and five days, respectively.
• The United States found the PrepComs held in 2016 to be very valuable in preparing for all aspects of that year’s RevCon, and firmly believes that a substantive preparatory process of such a length is the key to a successful Review Conference in 2021.

• With such a process, we see no reason why the RevCon should take more than two weeks. Without it, on the other hand, a third week will not help us.

• Mr. Chairman, another factor to consider is cost. Delegations should keep in mind the chronic financial difficulties in which we have found ourselves over the last several years.

• It is also important to recall our decision at last year’s Meeting of States Parties “that financial obligations for a given year will be limited to an amount based upon the average collection rate for the preceding three years.”

• This spending limit applies to Review Conference years just as it does to intersessional years. The net effect is that the more days of meeting time we budget for, the larger the gap becomes between our plans and what is actually achievable.

• This is easy to understand when we consider that the cost of 22 days of meetings for PrepComs and a RevCon, as suggested in the UNODA estimates, will obviously exceed the cost of our intersessional meetings, which amount to only 12 days.

• Indeed, the UNODA estimates that the next RevCon will cost about 27% higher than our current year budget.

• Given this constraint on what we can plan to spend and given the recent history of payments of assessed contributions, we are seriously concerned that sufficient funding will not be made available to hold a three-week RevCon at the cost estimated by UNODA.

• For these reasons, we urge other delegations to join us in taking a decision for a two-week RevCon, along with PrepComs of two-to-three and five days’ duration, respectively.