Mr. Chairman,

I would like to begin by congratulating you on your election to the Chair. My delegation assures you of its cooperation for the success of our common endeavors.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by Azerbaijan on behalf of NAM.

Mr. Chairman,

The current international security environment which has been deteriorating as the result of reckless policies and actions in defiance of rule of law and in disrespect of multilateral treaties; obliges all responsible States to seize every opportunity to re-invigorate the multilateral disarmament processes.

The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) represents the first international disarmament treaty through which one of the most dangerous avenues for arms race has been sought to be blocked.

It is, then, in the interest of BWC States Parties to do their utmost to uphold the norm against the use of biological weapons by anyone and under any circumstances.

In this context, Iran attaches great importance to the full and effective implementation of BWC as well as its strengthening in all its aspects.

The Convention could only be strengthened through meaningful multilateral negotiations and engagement.

Iran continues to strongly advocate for strengthening of the Convention through resumption of multilateral negotiations for a non-discriminatory, legally-binding Protocol, including on verification, dealing with all the articles of the Convention in a balanced and comprehensive manner.
Such a Protocol can provide necessary assurance that all States Parties would fulfill their obligations under the Convention. We call upon all States Parties to shoulder their responsibility. Those who continue to block the resumption of negotiations for this Protocol should be reminded of the consequences of placing the whole Convention in jeopardy.

Mr. Chairman,

While national implementation of the Convention is imperative, international cooperation is becoming essential more and more in order to sustain national capacity. This is all the more important given the rapid technological and scientific developments.

Without international cooperation and transfer of technology enhancing national implementation of the Convention is almost impossible.

Moreover, national measures should be arranged in a manner to promote peaceful cooperation in biological activities, as enshrined in Article X of the Convention.

Facilitating the participation in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the use of biological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes and not to hamper the economic and technological development of States Parties is the legal obligation of each BWC State Party.

Mr. Chairman,

The United States' economic sanctions, as vindictive and inhuman as they are, constitute a detrimental blow to the purposes of the Convention by impeding international cooperation even in health sector. The US sanctions are willfully, though wickedly, designed to deprive Iranian patients including innocent young kids of from accessing necessary medicine and medical treatment and thus violating their rights to health and to life.

I will give you just one example of how atrocious and repugnant the US' so called 'maximum pressure' has become. The US' sanctions has hampered the delivery of necessary protective bandages for patients with a rare skin condition known as Epidermolysis Bullosa or EB. Often known as 'butterfly children' because their skin is as fragile as the wings of a butterfly, EB patients need special care since even very mild frictions or bumps cause severe blistersing of their skin with unbearable pain and suffering. The protective bandage for these innocent patients is therefore a matter of life and death and the only treatment to avoid life threatening infections.

At least 15 Iranian children with EB have died since the reimposition of unilateral sanctions against Iran due to infection caused by lack of this protective bandage. The US' masters of the art of sanctions can happily take credit for this cold blood manslaughter. That's crime against humanity, if not genocide.
And I'm afraid to say that certain States in the West are ignoring the negative humanitarian impacts of US sanctions to the point of criminal negligence.

Mr. Chairman,

Universality of the Convention is very important for Iran. We welcome Tanzania as the 183rd State Party to the Convention. We support the continued efforts of BWC States parties in this regard.

The continuing refusal of the Israeli regime to accede to the BWC must be a matter of serious concern to all, given the facts and figures regarding this regime's malign behavior in the region.

Mr. Chairman,

Iran values the Meetings of Experts as a constructive platform for discussion and enhancing common understanding among States parties. We believe, however, that the best way to strengthen the Convention is through conclusion of a multilaterally negotiated legally binding Protocol dealing with all articles of the Convention.

My delegation congratulates the Meeting of Experts for their useful deliberations and looks forward to considering and debating their reports. We have tried to actively participate in the MX meetings and will continue to do so.

I would like to express my delegation’s appreciation for the efforts of the ISU as well.

I thank you.