Mr. Chair,

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the BWC as the first multilateral disarmament treaty and also as one of the core pillars of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The BWC underpins our collective efforts to counter the weaponisation of biological agents by states and also by non-state actors as the advancement in science and technology is eroding the technical barriers to their acquisition and development. It is now a common responsibility of each States Party to make this Convention more relevant and to facilitate a more robust implementation.

While we are pleased to note the continuous increase in the number of ratifications of the Convention, we urge the remaining non-State Parties to ratify and accede to the Convention as soon as possible. We also welcome that, as part of the 2018–2020 Intersessional Programme, the first Meeting of Experts took place last August in which States Parties could identify areas of convergence through constructive discussions. We are in support of all constructive measures discussed in the meeting, such as enhancing coordination with other international organizations, strengthening ISU, creating a database under Article VII, establishing guidelines for Article X reports, among others. We look forward to more in-depth and substantive discussions regarding these topics at the upcoming Meeting of Experts.
Mr. Chair,

My delegation is concerned that the overall level of CBM submission by States Parties remains low with less than half of all States Parties exchanging CBMs regularly. We strongly back measures to increase CBM reports returns and to make improvements in CBMs by enhancing the content of the report as well as its technical tools.

We also believe that sufficient capacity-building and assistance are essential prerequisites for ensuring the effectiveness and universal benefit of the Convention. Korea is actively participating in the international efforts for capacity-building, ranging from the construction of medical facilities to the provision of technical assistance and staff training in collaboration with multilateral organizations such as the WHO and UNICEF. Moreover, my government established the Global Disease Eradication Fund in 2017, designed to support capacity-building to prevent, detect and respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases. The Fund is financed by an airline ticket levy, collecting one dollar from every international airline ticket issued in Korea. We are also willing to share our experiences in the field of national implementation, international cooperation and assistance with other States Parties.

Let me also briefly touch on the relevant effective actions that the ROK is engaged in. We submitted a report on our efforts regarding Article X as a working paper at the 2017 MSP. My government hosted the UNSCR 1540 Industrial Outreach Conference for the Asia-Pacific Region which was supported by the UNODA with contributions from the EU and Germany in September this last year. On a domestic note, all relevant ministries and agencies gather on the annual occasion of the BWC Workshop and Biosafety Conference, to share and exchange views on countering biological weapons and securing biosafety, to eventually contribute to the effective implementation of the BWC at the national, regional and global levels.
Indeed, all these efforts will not be materialized unless we find a way to generate financial capability in BWC’s operation. Immediate action is needed to ensure the financial sustainability and viability of the BWC. The ROK is open and flexible to discuss a whole range of efficient measures on this. However, priority should be given to resolving systematic Non-Payment. The delayed payment problem should also be addressed. My delegation urges the payment of arrears and measures to prompt the payment of invoices. My delegation would like to highly commend the Chair’s efforts in this regard.

Mr. Chair,

The ROK would like to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the Convention and to the success of the 2018 Meeting of the States Parties and the Intersessional Programme for 2018–2020. Thank you. /End/