Mr Chair,

At the beginning, I insist on thanking you, Mr. Gjorgjinski, for all the fruitful work you have done so far. Let me assure you of Finland's full support to you.

I would also like to thank the BWC Implementation Support Unit for the continued valuable support to the States Parties in implementing the BTWC.

Finland fully aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the European Union. I would like to add some remarks from a national perspective.

We are satisfied with the constructive atmosphere in last year's MSP as well as the progress made at the Meetings of experts, led by the five able chairs.

Finland highly appreciates the universalization efforts of you, Mr Chair, as well as the ISU. We welcome new ratifications and accessions to the BTWC, and look forward to the expected ratification of Tanzania. In order to fulfill our national commitment to Article X of the BTWC, Finland has since 2014 carried out a development cooperation project with Tanzania on strengthening laboratory capacity and raising awareness in biosecurity and biosafety. Currently, we are finalizing the arrangements with Tanzania to extend this so-far successful project until the end of 2023. We hope that Finland’s support has contributed positively to Tanzania’s process of ratifying the Convention.

Mr Chair,

Finland stresses the need to prepare for increased biological risks/threats in a multisectoral manner involving all the relevant national and international stakeholders.

We welcome the UN Secretary General’s agenda for disarmament, including the proposal to strengthen the investigative capacities concerning biological weapons. A framework for a
coordinated international response to the use of biological weapons would be an important step forward.

Finland is concerned about the unsustainable financial status of the Convention, which put this very meeting at risk and resulted in a reduced amount of meeting days. We stress the need for the states parties in arrears to make necessary arrangements to pay their assessed contributions as soon as possible. The BTWC is one of the least expensive disarmament instruments, but too many resources have gone into tackling the problem. We need to look at ways to strengthen the will of countries to pay their contributions. Meanwhile, Finland is willing to consider a contingency provision or a temporary voluntary reserve fund to guarantee the necessary financial liquidity. We all, as states parties, must ensure the sustainability of the regime and ensure that the ISU has the necessary resources to perform all its core functions.

Lastly, Finland remains a strong supporter of promoting gender equality, also in the context of the BTWC.

Thank you, Mr Chair.