Mr. Chair,

Please allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the chair of this Meeting of States Parties (MSP). My delegation looks forward to supporting your efforts to achieve a successful outcome at the end of this week.

The Biological Weapons Convention remains one of the core pillars of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Convention not only sets a fundamental norm against using toxins and living organisms as means of warfare, but it also facilitates global efforts to promote the peaceful use of life sciences. We must ensure that the Convention remains effective and global in its reach.

Efforts to ensure universal adherence and full implementation of the Convention by all States Parties are key tasks. This requires that States Parties continue to engage actively. Norway welcomes the adoption of an intersessional program of work at last year’s meeting of the States Parties, and the subsequent constructive discussions during our Expert Meetings in August. Our deliberations this year clearly demonstrate the value of the MXs. It is of greatest importance that we make full use of this process to achieve further progress before the 2021 Review Conference.

This is, however, only possible with the adequate financial means. It is crucial that we resolve the serious financial situation facing the Convention. We value the Chair’s efforts to explore solutions and strongly encourage all States Parties to work together in order to establish measures to secure sustainable funding for the BWC. We urge all States Parties to pay their contributions in full and on time to ensure the continued work and functioning of the Convention.

In support of the Intersessional program and specifically MX 1 on Cooperation and Assistance, Norway has together with the ISU organized two workshops this fall with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X of the Convention. The workshops facilitated open and constructive discussions, and allowed state parties and external experts to explore topics such as capacity development, education and outreach, use of technology, financing, partnerships and possible synergies with other relevant sectors. The workshops highlighted the many cooperation projects already ongoing under Article X.

Norway attaches great importance to article X of the Convention. States Parties may need assistance and advice in strengthening national capacities and fulfilling their international commitments. Support and cooperation among countries is fundamental in order to respond to any outbreaks of diseases, natural or intentional. Norway is happy to announce that we will enhance our cooperation with the ISU and provide financial support for strengthening the implementation of Art.X. The support will put emphasis on building human capacities through South-South cooperation, general capacity building, trade and technology transfer and at last, but not least promoting beneficial technologies. The support will start in 2019 and run for a three years period.

By adopting such an approach, the BWC community will enable itself to develop practical measures for the further strengthening of our Convention. Norway remains committed to do its part in order to contribute to this endeavor.