Mr. Chair,

Sweden is fully aligned with the statement to be delivered by the European Union. I would like to make a few additional remarks from a national perspective.

First, let me welcome your appointment as chairperson of this Meeting of the States Parties (MSP). I assure you of the full support of the Swedish delegation. We salute your efforts to secure four days for this year’s MSP despite the difficult financial situation of the Convention.

Sweden commends the tireless efforts made by the Implementation Support Unit in providing States Parties with support and assistance relating to the Convention.

Sweden welcomes that Tanzania ratified the Convention this summer, becoming the 183rd States Party to the Convention. This is another significant step towards the universalization of the Convention.

Mr. Chair,

Sweden encourages all States Parties to implement a gender perspective in their efforts regarding disarmament and non-proliferation. As highlighted in the UN Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament, the implementation of gender perspectives contributes to more effective arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Sweden greatly appreciated the side event on gender-related impacts of biological weapons during this year’s Meetings of Experts.

The BTWC constitutes a central part of the global norm against biological weapons, which is imperative to international security. Recent progress within the scope of life sciences and technology makes for new opportunities regarding the prevention of the spread of diseases.
Nevertheless, we must consider that technical and scientific development also entails potential risks for new biological weapons to emerge. The BTWC plays a crucial role in preventing these risks from becoming reality. All States Parties to the Convention carry a shared responsibility to prevent the misuse of science and technology by any state or non-state actor.

Synergies between the BTWC and other relevant instruments and mechanisms can further reinforce the global norm against the use of biological weapons. In this context, Sweden supports the joint initiative with Germany on strengthening the UN Secretary-General’s Mechanism. The project is carried out by the Robert Koch Institute and the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) and will conclude with a Capstone Exercise to be held in Berlin in the autumn of 2020. To learn more about the exercise, I encourage you to attend the side event organized by Germany today at lunchtime.

Sweden appreciates that this year’s Meetings of Experts were concluded successfully. The Meetings of Experts continue to make a central part of the intersessional process in the run-up to the Ninth Review Conference in 2021. We would like to see reflected in the report from this meeting the proposals put forward in the meetings of experts where there is a general agreement among States Parties. That would strengthen our ability to work in a focused way during the intersessional period.

Mr. Chair,

It should lie in the interest of all States Parties that the financial situation of the Convention is stabilized. Predictable and sufficient funding is central in this regard. Sweden urges all States Parties to fully comply with their financial obligations under the Convention. While we appreciate that this MSP will last for four days, we are yet to reach a decision on the budget and arrangements for the upcoming Review Conference and its Preparatory Committee. We encourage all States Parties to show responsibility and flexibility in order to reach a consensual outcome at this MSP.

Lastly, Sweden encourages all States Parties to engage constructively in the discussions during this MSP. Joint efforts are necessary in order to ensure that the BTWC remains a forceful instrument for international security.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.