Mr Chair,

Allow me to join previous speakers in thanking you, as well as the Implementation Support Unit (ISU), for your efforts in preparing this year’s Meeting of States Parties (MSP). Let me assure you of the full support of my delegation.

Mr Chair,

We are about to conclude the first year of the intersessional process (ISP) we adopted 12 months ago. We welcome the discussions that took place at the Meetings of Experts (MXs) last August, which provided for focused deliberations and proved to be more interactive than previous Meetings. It will be important to capture key aspects of those discussions in the final document of this MSP to ensure that the ISP is as productive as possible. The outcome document needs to provide guidance on elements to be taken forward next year, enabling us to work in an iterative and as dynamic manner as possible.

In this regard, we consider the summary reports by the MX Chairs to be particularly useful and I would like to briefly highlight a few elements that are of importance to my country:

First, strengthening international cooperation and assistance is necessary to address the transnational challenges of modern biology. Switzerland continues to attach great importance to the effective implementation of this key pillar of the Convention. We have a number of practical proposals regarding the assistance and cooperation database that we should take forward.

Second, it is important to recognize the necessity of continued consideration of advances in science and technology, which have the potential to create both risks and benefits to the object and purpose of the Convention. During this MSP, we will have to decide on the special topic to be considered by the MX2 in 2019. Switzerland supports the proposal expressed in Working Paper 3 submitted by Australia to this year’s MX2 that suggests to consider the issue of synthetic biology, and in particular the aspect of genome synthesis. We should also focus on moving forward on the code of conduct for scientists.
Third, in the framework of MX3, it will be important to inspire multifaceted action to make further progress in terms of national implementation of the BWC. By assisting each other, and through the invaluable support of the ISU and specialized actors from civil society, States Parties should be able to make significant progress. We welcome the elements highlighted by the MX3 Chair in his report.

Fourth, we agree with the Chair of MX4 that Article VII is particularly ripe for taking concrete action. We welcome his proposal to move forward on the elaboration of guidelines for requesting assistance as well as on the operationalisation of an Article VII database.

Fifth, institutional strengthening is a key issue for the sustainability and relevance of the BWC and a lot remains to be achieved in this field. In order to gradually approach this challenging aim, we should seek a pragmatic and effective way forward. My country is convinced that many of the necessary steps to strengthen the Convention can be achieved by leveraging practical proposals that were made during the last intersessional process.

Mr Chair,

We remain gravely concerned by the financial situation of the Convention. Instead of improving, the situation seems to be deteriorating. Our meeting has not only had to be shortened but also the ISU remains in a precarious situation. These financial challenges are first and foremost caused by non- or late payments of assessed contributions. We call upon all concerned States Parties to live up to their financial obligations under the Convention. The adoption of measures to stabilize the financial situation is absolutely necessary. We welcome the documents submitted by the Chair to this effect, and we expect that this Meeting will take the necessary decisions by the end of the week.

To conclude, Mr Chair, I would like to inform States Parties about a side event my delegation, together with Germany and Sweden, is organizing on Thursday afternoon on the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Biological Weapons, to which you are cordially invited.

I thank you.