I thank you Mr. Chairman for giving me the floor.

Ghana aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday by Iran on behalf of Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement.

I congratulate you, Ambassador Molnar on your assumption as President-Designate of the Preparatory Committee for the BWC Eighth Review Conference. Ghana joins other States Parties in welcoming Angola as the 175th member of the BWC. Ghana also welcomes La Cote D'Ivoire as a signatory State. My delegation thanks the ISU for their great work in preparing for the Review Conference and acknowledges the contributions of various sponsors.

Although Ghana has yet to domesticate the BWC into national law to enhance the enforcement of civil or criminal sanctions by competent authorities against malicious use of biological material, it has taken steps to build local capacity to meet its obligations under the Convention which it signed on April 10, 1972 and ratified on June 06, 1975. Ghana relies on some of its existing national legislations to enforce criminal or civil sanctions against offenders, including among others the Biosafety Authority Act, 2011 (Act 831). Research institutions and laboratories in Ghana have Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and regulations that mitigate risks associated with the handling of biological agents or materials.

Ghana acknowledges that international technical assistance, institutional empowerment and capacity building support have not been adequate to synergize the efforts of its competent stakeholders at the national legislation. In this regard, my delegation supports proposals made by earlier speakers for full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article X of the BWC.

Ghana re-affirms its commitment to the Convention and has no intention of developing bacteriological weapons. My delegation supports the view that Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), which includes Biological Weapons, constitute global threat to international peace and security. We remain committed to global efforts aimed at achieving a world free of such weapons.
Mr. Chairman,

The Ebola outbreak in 2014 served as a wakeup call for all States to step up our preparedness to handle such epidemics in future. Ghana activated its Emergency Operational Center to coordinate technical assistance and control activities with assistance from the World Health Organization among others. The importance of the obligations under the Convention was fully appreciated during the EBOLA virus epidemic as Ghana recognized the urgent need for Confidence Building Measures, institutional capacity building and technical support.

Ghana has developed a National Response Plan for Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Incidents with support from the EU. Following this, Ghana in December, 2015 held bilateral meetings with some Member States including the United States and Canada on challenges it faces regarding technical support requirements. It is therefore envisaged that the BWC implementation review exercise will help Ghana identify the gaps in the fulfillment of its obligations under Convention and help in accelerating the pace to domesticate the Convention into national law.

In conclusion, Ghana supports the position that it is through universal adherence to the international disarmament and non-proliferation regimes that the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction can be curbed and the preservation of mankind guaranteed. We therefore urge States that are not yet party to this Convention to do so at the earliest convenience.

I thank you.