Mr. Chair,

An important message from both the General debate of this Committee, and not least this thematic cluster, is that any use of chemical weapons is deplorable, and those responsible for such horrendous acts should be held accountable to the ICC.

Norway welcomes the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2118 and the OPCW Executive Council Decision of 27 September 2013 on the destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons. Syria acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention on 14 October and we expect it to act in full compliance with its provisions.

There can be no doubt that the use of chemical weapons constitutes a threat to international peace and security. The recent incidents, where chemical weapons have been used, illustrates the urgent need to further strengthen the norm against chemical weapons as laid out in the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Last year we celebrated the 15 year anniversary of the entry into force of the CWC, while this year we congratulate the OPCW on the well-deserved award of this year’s Nobel Peace Prize. The OPCW has played a crucial role in ridding the world from one category of weapons of mass destruction.

Norway welcomes the successful outcome of the CWC Review Conference last April which will strengthen our resolve to achieve and maintain a world free of chemical weapons. The Conference provided us with a forward-looking agenda for the OPCW. In this respect we must ensure that the Organization maintains its necessary political and financial support to carry out its mandate. Norway has over the last years provided voluntary funding to the OPCW in promoting

(Check against delivery)
national implementation and in advancing peaceful cooperation in accordance with Article XI of the Convention.

An important message from the Review Conference is to accelerate its disarmament pillar. The destruction of existing stock-piles is far from completed and will remain the core objective of this organization for years to come. We reiterate that time bound destruction of chemical weapons remains one of the core principles of the CWC. Norway strongly encourages possessor states to do their utmost to meet their destruction targets as soon as possible and in a verifiable manner.

Verification plays also a crucial role in providing confidence that all States Parties are living up to their non-proliferation obligations under the Convention. Norway will continue to advocate that the OPCW further strengthen its capacity in this area, including the possibility to carry out challenge inspections. Likewise, Norway maintains the conviction that the question about incapacitating chemical agents deserves more attention.

Norway is also pleased that civil society was given a voice at the last Review Conference. We remain convinced that the NGO-community has an important role in sustaining the norm against chemical weapons.

Mr. Chair, the 21st of August incident has shown that a ban against a category of weapons of mass destruction is not in itself sufficient to prevent its use. While much focus has – rightly – been devoted to chemical weapons, we must do the necessary preparatory work with respect to the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention.

Fortunately the Seventh Review Conference of the BTWC provided us a road-map to further consolidate this instrument. With respect to universalization, Norway welcomes the accession of Cameroon, Nauru, Guyana and Malawi.

Norway remains committed to the current inter-sessional process adopted at the Review Conference. The inter-sessional process has given us a practical and innovative arena for enhanced cooperation in promoting national implementation of the BTWC. We are pleased with the constructive way the Meeting of Experts helps us in advancing the work of the BTWC.

Norway attaches furthermore great importance to the confidence building measures (CBMs) as a mean to demonstrate full compliance to the obligations set by the BTWC. While recognizing that the CNMs are voluntary in nature, Norway urges all States Parties to make use of this reporting mechanism.

Over the last years, Norway has greatly appreciated working closely with the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) and Indonesia in promoting biosafety and biosecurity and peaceful cooperation as stipulated in Article X of the Treaty. The ISU has clearly demonstrated its added value in serving the States parties to the BTWC and in working closely with other international agencies such as the WHO, FAO and OIE. It is important that we continue to provide ISU with necessary political and financial support.
Mr. Chair,

A few words on the prevention of arms race in outer space. Norway is ready to move forward on deliberations on how to prevent an arms race in outer space and support the annual resolution in the UN General Assembly on this topic.

At the same time, we should not delay in enhancing transparency measures on civilian outer space activities. We are grateful for the work carried out by the EU on an international code of conduct for outer space activities and look forward to the open ended consultations in Bangkok later on this year.

Lastly, Norway joins others in calling for the full universality of the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.