Mr. Chairman,

The United States is strongly committed to promoting international peace and prosperity through strengthening partnerships and cooperation with regional and other inter-governmental organizations. Developing effective partnerships between regions and international organizations is also key. In this regard, organizations and initiatives, such as the IAEA, CTBTO, OPCW, BWC Implementation Support Unit, the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, and the Global Health Security Agenda, deserve praise for collaborative efforts to address development, health, and security challenges at both the regional and international levels.

As a strong supporter of nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, important measures that move us closer to our shared vision of a world without nuclear weapons, I especially want to applaud the efforts of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean as it commemorates the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean next February. The United States remains committed to the goal of establishing a Middle East WMD-Free Zone, and we remain prepared to actively support direct, inclusive discussions among the regional states, which is essential to progress.

Mr. Chairman, regional groups also provide important avenues to further disarmament, security and nonproliferation objectives. In East Asia, the regional architecture has steadily matured. For the first time, the 2016 East Asia Summit issued a standalone Statement on Non-Proliferation. Strength derived from the unity of the East Asia Summit participants will be vital to address regional threats such as North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs. On September 9, the DPRK conducted its fifth nuclear test – the second this year – and conducted an alarming number of launches using UN proscribed ballistic missile technology. These provocative and destabilizing actions are in flagrant violation of multiple UN Security Council Resolutions and pose a grave threat to our common security. We intend to work closely with all our allies and partners to develop and apply new
measures to compel the DPRK’s leaders to change course and return to
denuclearization. In the face of these threats, our commitment to the defense of our
allies, including the Republic of Korea and Japan remains ironclad.

In Europe, the OSCE remains one of the most important institutions in pursuit of
comprehensive security. The United States remains committed to preserving,
strengthening, and modernizing conventional arms control in Europe, based on key
principles and commitments. Unfortunately, we face acute challenges to European
and Eurasian security including terrorist incidents; active conflict in Nagorno-
Karabakh; and intolerance which has risen as the refugee and migrant crisis across
Europe has intensified. Russia’s aggression in eastern Ukraine and its attempted
annexation of Crimea are a clear violation of Russia’s international obligations and
contravention of its OSCE commitments. Russia’s violation of the Intermediate-
Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) also severely undermines European security.

In Africa, the Americas, and the Asia-Pacific, we also work closely with the regional
organizations, as well as the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, to foster
implementation of UNSCR 1540 and to address individual regional concerns,
including chem/bio issues, border security, and small arms/light weapons.

Beyond nuclear issues, the growing membership in the BWC in most regions reflects
its value in setting a global norm banning these abhorrent weapons. The United
States would like BWC States Parties to take steps at their November Review
Conference to strengthen the Convention in a variety of ways, including through
regional cooperation and efforts to increase membership and implementation in
developing country regions. Further we welcome the strong support from most
regional groups for the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical
Weapons (OPCW) and its efforts, along with Member States to strengthen the global
norm against the development and use of chemical weapons. Toward that end, the
United States strongly condemns Syria and ISIL’s use of chemical weapons as
documented in the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism’s (JIM) August 24th
Report. The use of chemical weapons is reprehensible and those who use such
weapons must be held accountable.

In conclusion, the United States is firmly committed to working with the international
community including in regional settings to advance international security,
nonproliferation and disarmament. All states benefit from actions that stabilize
regional security, and should continue to make strides to improve security conditions
regionally and by extension globally. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.