Mr. Chairperson,

For the past several decades, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) have been the core pillars of the global disarmament and nonproliferation regime together with the NPT. The two treaties have underpinned our collective efforts to outlaw the development, production and stockpiling of chemical and biological weapons and associated substances. In the case of CWC, the international community has made a remarkable progress by destroying 96 percent of all declared chemical weapons and also by achieving near universalization of its membership.

However, the threat of the use of chemical and biological weapons today is no less serious than that of the nuclear weapons. Our common goal of a world free of chemical weapons is still out of reach, as we are repeatedly witnessing the horrific use of chemical weapons across the world, including in Syria and in the UK. Four countries are still refusing to join the international efforts for outlawing these dangerous weapons.

In particular, it is deeply concerning that the issue of Syrian chemical weapons still remains unaddressed even five years after Syria’s joining the CWC in 2013. My delegation notes with concern the recent report by the
Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) that the OPCW is still unable to resolve all of the identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in Syria’s initial declaration. In this regard, we would like to add our voices in support of the work of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and urge the Syrian Government to render its full cooperation to the OPCW mechanisms. Also, we strongly condemn any use of chemical weapons under any circumstances anywhere. Those responsible for such heinous acts must be held accountable.

In this regard, my delegation welcomes and supports the Decision Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use, which was adopted at the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties of the CWC last June. The attribution mechanism to be introduced at the OPCW will serve to deter potential perpetrators from using chemical weapons in the future and thus contribute to the effective implementation of the CWC. (My delegation encourages all to provide valuable support to the OPCW so that the Organization can indeed fulfill the mandates entrusted to it in a timely and effective manner.)

On a separate note, my delegation firmly believes that universality of the Convention is a key element in ensuring global peace and security, thus should be given a top priority. Again we urge the four remaining States not Party to the CWC to ratify or accede to it as soon as possible without any precondition. As the Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention approaches, my delegation remains deeply committed to its successful outcomes and looks forward to working closely with States Parties and the OPCW.

Mr. Chairperson,

Regarding the BWC, the Republic of Korea has been consistent in its support for reinforcing the BWC regime, based on each State Party’s robust implementation of the obligations under the Convention.
Considering the rapidly developing life sciences today and their dual-use nature, my delegation believes it important to strike a careful balance between the substantial benefit of biological technologies and their proliferation risks. The nexus between emerging technologies and potential weaponization requires close examination in order to keep the BWC relevant and up-to-dated.

In this context, my delegation welcomes that the 2017 Meeting of States Parties concluded successfully and agreed on establishing an Inter-Sessional Programme for 2018-2020. Notably, it was all the more opportune and meaningful to have an in-depth discussion on the "Review of Developments in the field of Science and Technology related to the Convention" at the BWC Meeting of Experts last August.

My delegation also highlights that strengthened confidence building measures between the States Parties and sufficient capacity-building and assistance are essential prerequisites to ensure the effectiveness and universal benefit of the Convention.

As a concrete effort in this regard, the ROK government established the "Global Disease Eradication Fund" in 2017, which is designed to support capacity building to prevent, detect and respond outbreak of infectious diseases of developing countries. The fund is financed by airline ticket levy – one dollar levy is added to every international airline ticket issued in Korea. Furthermore, in collaboration with international organizations such as WHO and UNICEF, the ROK government is committed to reinforcing the capacity of relevant laboratories and workforce in developing countries.

I would like to close by briefly noting the need to promote financial stability of the BWC regime. We have to find a way to generate financial capability in the operational process of the BWC as soon as possible.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.  /End/