The UK aligns itself with the statement made by the EU. I would like to make some further remarks in a national capacity.

The complete ban on the production and use of chemical and biological weapons remains a central pillar of international law and the International Rules Based System.

That chemical weapons continue to be used demonstrates that some are still prepared to flout the norms of civilized behaviour. We condemn all use of both chemical and biological weapons. We must all persist in striving to consign these heinous weapons to history.

To ensure accountability and deter future use, it is vital to identify the perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks. Yet Russia continues to prevent effective action at the UN Security Council to investigate and hold to account those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The emphatic vote in 2018 to enable the OPCW to attribute responsibility for chemical weapons use in Syria underlines the international community’s determination to reinforce the norm.

We urge all states to uphold the Chemical Weapons Convention under their responsibilities as signatories and help strengthen the capability of the OPCW tasked with protecting this important Convention.

Mr Chair,

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is the cornerstone of the international ban on biological weapons. We welcome the accession of Tanzania, which deposited its instrument of ratification in London on 14 August, and call on all States who have not yet done so to follow suit. We must also continue to promote the full and effective implementation of the Convention. The UK welcomes the agreement by the 2018 Meeting of States Parties of measures to ease the financial crisis in the Convention and to provide stability to the Implementation Support Unit.
The UK also calls for further international co-operation to build and sustain the UN Secretary-General’s Mechanism, the only international tool to investigate an allegation of use of biological weapons.

Finally, Mr Chair, the UK commends the central role Security Council Resolution 1540 plays in preventing nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery, and related materials, from falling into the hands of non-state actors, including terrorists. The adoption of Resolution 2325 was the most significant revision to the work of 1540 in its now almost 15-year history, and a welcome example of Council consensus on non-proliferation issues. We must continue to promote its effective implementation if we are to tackle the continuing threat that non-state actors, including terrorists, pose.

Thank you, Mr Chair.