Mr. Chair,

The Republic of Korea would like to reiterate the significance of the Conventions against chemical and biological weapons, which established complete ban on their production and use, as the core pillars of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In particular, as we witness the actual use of chemical agents by both state and non-state actors, it is imperative that the international community addresses the threats with a sense of urgency.

\(\text{(CWC)}\)

Mr. Chair, -

The achievement that the international community has made since the entry into force of the CWC was truly remarkable. More than 97 percent of the declared chemical weapons stockpiles have been destroyed and verified by the OPCW. However, our shared goal of a world free of chemical weapons is still out of reach, as witnessed by repeated uses of chemical weapons around the world, including in Syria.

More than six years have passed since the Syrian Arab Republic acceded to the CWC but there remain significant challenges with regard to Syria’s chemical weapons programme. My delegation notes with serious concern that the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) of the OPCW still cannot verify the accuracy and completeness of Syria’s initial declaration. We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to render the fullest possible cooperation to the DAT to address all of its outstanding declaration issues.
We would also like to reiterate our continued commitment to and support for the work of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) of the OPCW. The FFM has been fulfilling its mission in a transparent, independent, and impartial way in an ever more challenging environment. My delegation looks forward to its continued work, including on an incident in Kabanah in May 2019.

We reaffirm our support for the June 2018 Decision of the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties of the CWC, based on which the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) was established. We welcome that the IIT initiated its work and look forward to its first report. However, my delegation is deeply concerned that the members of the IIT are being denied access to the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic and to the necessary documents. We urge all relevant States Parties to extend maximum support for the work of the IIT, which is an integral part of the OPCW.

Universal application of the CWC has been, and continues to be, one of our top priorities. Fully convinced that universality of the CWC is a key to ensuring global peace and security, my delegation urges four States not Party to join the CWC as early as possible without further delay or preconditions.

(BWC)

Concerning the Biological Weapons Convention, the treaty not only outlaws the use of disease as a weapon but also confirms that such use would be "repugnant to the conscience of mankind" as stated in its preamble.

However, advances in science and technology have increased the risks of biological weapons proliferation, lowering the technical barriers to their acquisition and development by states or non-state actors. The Biological Weapons Convention needs to remain the first international framework for responding to these challenges, based on each state party's full and faithful implementation of the treaty obligations.
In this line, our delegation welcomes in-depth discussions on the development of science and technology, including a suggestion of an establishment of the Scientific and Technological Experts Advisory Forum with a balanced regional distribution. Also, we are in support of establishing guidelines to assist states that may request assistance in the framework of Article VII. We look forward to more in-depth and substantive discussions in these regards in the next Conference of States Parties (CSP) and the 2021 Review Conference.

Taking this opportunity, the ROK would like to express its deep concern over the deteriorating financial situation in the disarmament conventions including the BWC. We welcome the setting up of the Working Capital Fund for the ISU (Implementation Support Unit) of the BWC, based on the decision made at the 2018 CSP. It is a relief that the coming 2019 CSP of the BWC is affordable; however, we need to come up with appropriate measures and incentives to address the long-standing unpaid or late contributions as they are the root causes threatening the very life of the Convention.

Mr. Chair,

The Republic of Korea is actively implementing obligations under the BWC by submitting CBM reports, enacting domestic legislation, managing the export control regime, and building operational capabilities. We are also committed to international cooperation and assistance efforts for capacity-building, at both bilateral and multilateral levels. Bilaterally, we are offering various assistance programs to developing countries, in cooperation with the Korea International Cooperation Agency, including the construction of medical facilities, provision of technical assistance and medical staff training. Multilaterally, the Republic of Korea is also actively participating in capacity-building programs through, in particular, the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) and the Global Partnership (GP).

Thank you, Mr. Chair. /End/