Thank you Mr. Chairman,

I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Ambassador Cleopa K. Mailu, on your appointment as Chair of the 2020 Meeting of State Parties of the Biological Weapons Convention. In the long period after the last MSP, affected by postponements and uncertainty, your leadership was essential to bring us to a safe port. My delegation is convinced that under your guidance, endurance and creativity we will reach a successful MSP, and be assured of my delegation’s full support.

Mr. Chair,

This is the last MSP of a cycle that initiated in 2018, with the Meetings of Experts of that year. Let me briefly review, therefore, Brazil’s main positions.

Firstly, Brazil stresses the need for a balanced implementation of the BWC pillars, namely non-proliferation and cooperation for peaceful uses. This necessary balance should not only be at the core of daily cooperation activities but also be reflected in the structure of the ISU. We are prepared to engage in discussions regarding the creation of the post of a cooperation officer within the Implementation Support Unit, who should, however, be
under the overview of a cooperation committee integrated by rotating positions between the state parties. The two proposals are essentially bound to each other and should be addressed simultaneously.

The rapid pace of scientific and technological developments in the field of Life Sciences has accelerated since the last Review Conference. As many of these developments have a potential dual-use dimension, the BWC seems to spring back into the center of the disarmament discussions because of them. A particularly worrying development is the growing popularization of certain techniques in the area of microbiology, increasing the risks of weaponization and access by non-state actors, while biological weapons remain as the less regulated weapons of mass destruction. It is with optimism that we see progress in two of the main discussions undertaken during the ISP: the Tianjin Guidelines for a Code of Conduct, of which Brazil became a cosponsor; and a Scientific Advisory Body, which format we still need to define.

While we lack a verification protocol, voluntary transparency measures, CBMs, are the only transparency mechanisms officially recognized by the Convention. Likewise, the Convention's official documents and machinery should only refer to activities and programs consensually agreed by member-states.
Assistance, response, and preparedness seem to be an area where there are some low-hanging fruits pending approval by the IX Review Conference. We should committ our time and energy, as well as exert flexibility with a view of reaching common ground on the area of the BWC implementation mostly related to the needs of populations affected by the consequences of biological weapons, if that dire outcome takes place.

We believe that the discussions on strengthening the institutional framework of the Convention have led to the configuration of what we have been calling a “negotiation package.” Every state-part and regional group certainly has its own definition, design, and, mainly, the substance of this “negotiation package”. For the sake of strengthening the Convention, however, we should bear in mind that the outcome of the IX Review Conference will have to be broad and inclusive. We should all have a stake in it!

Mr. Chair,

We would like to take this opportunity to thank your Ambassador Mailu for preparing the report on universalization activities. The BWC is almost an universal treaty with 183 state parties. The natural outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has taught the international community what would
be the dreadful consequences of a hypothetical use of a biological weapon. There is no more room or justification for remaining outside the framework of the BWC. Brazil calls upon all signatories states to ratify the Convention, and the remaining few countries that are totally outside the purview of the Convention to sign and ratify the BWC.

My delegation also thanks the chairs of the Meeting of Experts, convened last August, for those meetings’ official reports with the corresponding annexes, which were submitted on the personal capacity of the MXs chairs.

We also appreciate the Implementation Support Unit annual report. It is comprehensive and quite informative, although my delegation is still struggling to adjust to the new website, that is not as “user-friendly” as it is stated in the annual report.

Mr. Chair,

Brazil believes that a balanced geographical distribution and rotation among regional groups in conducting meetings are important features of multilateral diplomacy. We should make the utmost effort to prevent any deviation from these defining principles of multilateralism. Whichever the hurdles and challenges, we are convinced that under your guidance, and the
flexibility of all state parties, it will be possible to overcome obstacles in setting the required decisions for the next Review Conference.

I thank you Mr. Chair.