Dear Ambassador Mailu,

please let me congratulate you on assuming the Chair of this Meeting of States Parties. We are grateful for your thorough preparations and look forward to a fruitful meeting under your able guidance. It goes without saying that you have the full support of my delegation.

Germany aligns itself with the statement of the European Union to be delivered in the course of this meeting.

Mr Chair,

we prepare for two major anniversaries: The Geneva Protocol was drawn up in 1925, almost 100 years ago. Nearly 50 years ago our visionary predecessors concluded the BTWC.

In the light of those upcoming anniversaries, it is our shared responsibility to seize the window of opportunity offered by the Ninth Review Conference and forward the process of the BTWC.

Our task in these days is to agree on key aspects of the upcoming Review Conference 2022. I encourage all of us to overcome past rifts and constructively engage in this process

Mr. Chair,
The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically underlined the importance of biological safety and security. It has tested the BTWC’s continued strength, not only as the global convention against biological weapons but also as a pillar of a rules-based global architecture that allows for peaceful uses of life science and technology.

At the same time we see that revolutionary advances in the biological sciences and new technologies come along with new opportunities, but also new risks.

It is against this background that my government is of the firm conviction that the BTWC therefore must finally be equipped with a mechanism able to review scientific and technological developments – a mechanism composed by dedicated scientists, best placed to assess the potential for beneficial use as well as the possible misuse of new technologies.

Germany has initiated proposals, working papers and studies towards this aim. Less than a year ahead of the Review Conference it is time to find common ground and sketch out the nuts and bolts of a proposal we can all support. We invite all States Parties to be part of this process.

Mr Chair,

Another area of in which scientific cooperation is key to success, is the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, which Germany will be chairing in 2022. We will use our Chairmanship also to support and strengthen the BTWC in many ways, inter alia, striving for the universalization and national implementation of the Convention or further advancing the Global Partnership’s Signature Initiative for mitigating biological risks in Africa, which our predecessor as Chair, the United Kingdom, has initiated so successfully.
Under the roof of the Global Partnership and in pursuing the goals of the BTWC, we have been operating our German Biosecurity Programs since 2013, implemented by German scientific institutes who understand the needs of their international peers, create fruitful relations for responsible science, and have proven extremely valuable in assisting partners in meeting the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemics.

Germany furthermore has undertaken, through several long-standing projects, various activities to strengthen the UNSGM, the only existing mechanism for the investigation of alleged use of chemical, biological or toxin weapons.

It is my pleasure to invite you to attend a side-event in support of the UNSGM, organized by the Robert Koch Institute today.

Mr. Chair,

The intersessional programme has proved to be an excellent opportunity to enhance the Convention’s implementation. The challenge remains to link the results of the constructive MX to the MSP and ultimately to the Review Conference.

In this respect we sincerely thank the MX Chairs for their summary papers and the MSP Chair for his compilation of all proposals. We encourage the Meeting of States Parties to endorse these reports in its final report.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank the dedicated staff of the ISU. Seeing the large benefit generated by this small team, its mandate has not only to be extended but we repeat our long-standing proposal to complement the ISU with a science and cooperation officer and to strengthen the ISU as a whole.

Thank you, Mr. Chair