Mr Chairman,

Thank you for giving me the floor. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on assuming the chairmanship of this meeting. I assure you of my delegation’s full support and cooperation. I would also like to thank Mr. Daniel Feakes, head of the ISU, and his team for their efforts in convening this meeting.

2. Malaysia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and other States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

3. Allow me to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

Mr Chairman,

4. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has caused such broad, devastating and disproportionate impacts to every aspect of our lives. The pandemic has proven that infectious disease outbreaks could paralyse the global economy, undermine global security, and cause tremendous human suffering and loss of life. It exposes our weaknesses and lack of preparedness in handling such a global and indiscriminate outbreak. In light of this, it is important for us to reflect on the need to address the absence of compliance and verification mechanisms under this Convention.

5. This meeting and the upcoming 9th BWC Review Conference are opportune platforms for States Parties to take concrete actions in strengthening this Convention and enhancing international resilience against future pandemic. Malaysia attaches high importance to the BWC, and remains committed to enhancing the effectiveness and strengthening the implementation of the BWC.
6. Malaysia continues to believe that effective implementation of the BWC requires a balanced and non-discriminatory approach to all provisions under the Convention. Malaysia strongly believes that biological and toxin weapons pose real threats to the international community. States Parties have the responsibility to agree on effective and concrete measures to ensure the effective implementation of the BWC.

Mr Chairman,

7. In order to strengthen the implementation of the BWC at the national level, Malaysia has drafted a National Policy on the BWC. This policy will be implemented from 2022, upon the approval by the Cabinet. The policy outlines strategies to strengthen national implementation, increase awareness and understanding on comprehensive biosecurity culture, enhance oversight mechanisms in science and technology, and ensure the effective multi-agency coordination in responding to deliberate biological incidents.

8. This year, Malaysia has organised and participated in a series of workshops at national and international levels, co-hosted by the Health Security Partners (HSP). In June 2021, Malaysia and the HSP organised an online National Workshop on "Effective and Responsible Use of Social Media for Health Security Communication". In July 2021, Malaysia participated in the Regional Workshop on "Countering Low Effort Biothreats from Toxins" organised by the Indonesian Biorisk Association and the HSP. In October 2021, Malaysia and the HSP convened an online International Workshop on "Non-proliferation Norms in the Disinformation Age".

9. This international workshop was participated by representatives from India, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Morocco, and the Philippines. All of these workshops were held to provide an opportunity for participants to exchange views and share best practices in planning and developing strategies to reduce risks of disinformation and misinformation via social media platforms.

Mr Chairman,

10. Malaysia thanks the ISU for preparing the reports and documents for this week’s meeting, and expresses our appreciation to all chairs for their hard work in steering the proceedings of the 2020 Meetings of Experts in August and September 2021. Malaysia notes that many useful discussions were held during this year’s Meetings of Experts. We hope that outcomes of the Meetings of Experts and Meeting of States Parties this year can contribute substantively to the preparations and discussions of the upcoming 9th BWC Review Conference in 2022.

11. Malaysia takes note that the progress in universalisation activities has slowed down in 2020 and 2021, which may be due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the pre-
prioritization of scarce resources in BWC, as reflected in the report. Malaysia hopes that more initiatives could be undertaken in the future in striving towards universal observance of the Convention.

12. Malaysia also notes that due to the travel restrictions in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, national experts from only five developing States Parties were sponsored to attend the Meetings of Experts this year. Malaysia, therefore, welcomes the proposal to transfer the allocation of funds in 2021 to 2022, and hopes that this sponsorship programme will continue to support the participation of developing States Parties in annual BWC meetings.

13. In relation to the Confidence-Building Measures (CBM), Malaysia continues to believe that the CBM is a useful tool in enhancing transparency and building confidence among States Parties. Malaysia welcomes the increasing number of CBM reports submission in 2021, which marks the highest number of reports ever submitted thus far. Malaysia has also contributed to the 92 reports submitted this year. Malaysia has also been invited to share our experience in preparing and submitting the CBM report in several virtual trainings, including with the Sri Lankan and Fijian authorities. Both of the virtual trainings were organised by the ISU under the auspices of the EU.

14. Before concluding, I would like to reiterate Malaysia’s resolute commitment to the work of the Convention, and to work closely and constructively with all States Parties in achieving the objectives of this Meeting. I assure you of my delegation’s full support and cooperation, and wish you a productive Meeting.

Thank you.