Mr. Vice Chair,

India congratulates you on your presiding over the Preparatory Committee meetings. India also thanks the vice chairs for their stewardship of the work of the States Parties during the last few months. My delegation assures you of our full support and cooperation.

We would also like to place on record our appreciation of the BWC ISU for their excellent work.

India attaches high importance to the Biological Weapons Convention, which is the first non-discriminatory disarmament treaty banning a complete category of weapons of mass destruction.

We are meeting in the Preparatory Committee in the shadow of disturbing geopolitical developments and the pandemic that preceded it.

This must strengthen our resolve address substantive issues and achieve productive outcomes at the Prep Com, that will further strengthen this Convention.

Mr. Vice Chair

The Ninth Review Conference of the BWC is an opportunity to review the functioning of the Convention, to review the fulfilment by States parties of their obligations, and, also to agree on measures to further strengthen the Convention.

India is pleased that the inter sessional programme in the run up to the Ninth Rev Con has been useful and facilitated robust exchanges at the Meeting of Experts and the Meeting of State Parties last year, in which India has participated constructively.

Tangible outcomes at the Rev Con will help shape a purposeful intersessional programme for the next Review Cycle.

Mr. Vice Chair

Universalization of the Convention and its full and effective implementation is a high priority for India.
India reiterates its call for institutional strengthening of the Convention, including negotiation of a comprehensive and legally binding Protocol, providing for an effective, universal and non-discriminatory verification mechanism to strengthen the implementation of the Convention by States Parties. While CBMs may increase trust among States Parties by enhancing transparency, they are not a substitute for an effective mechanism for verification and compliance.

Mr. Vice Chair

India believes that effective implementation of Article X, could bring equitable benefits for States Parties, in particular developing countries, and will also help in realizing universal adherence to the Convention and its full and effective implementation.

India hopes that the joint India-France proposal for Establishment of a Database for Assistance under Article VII of the Convention can provide a concrete path for operationalizing this important Article dealing with Assistance, Response and Preparedness.

The Covid-19 pandemic has reinforced the value of preparedness and solidarity in responding effectively to biological events. India and France have conducted a series of informal consultations including interactive sessions and technical workshops during the inter-sessional period, to develop an inclusive proposal. We hope that a decision to establish an Article VII database can be adopted by the Ninth Review Conference.

Mr. Vice Chair,

India strongly believes that the BWC must respond effectively to the challenges posed by the new and emerging scientific and technological developments of relevance to the Convention. India has been submitting an annual Resolution at the UN General Assembly on the "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament", which is adopted by consensus. Reaching a common understanding on a framework and criteria for assessing benefits and potential risks of the new and emerging technologies to the Convention is important. In this context, a Scientific Review Mechanism for the Convention is long overdue. We look forward to fruitful discussions on this important issue.

A strong and financially stable ISU is a very high priority.
India has always met all its financial obligations under the Convention on time. My delegation shares the widely held view among States Parties on the need for the Convention to be placed on a firm and sustainable financial footing. India maintains that the BWC Working Capital Fund, agreed to by the 2018 MSP as an interim financial measure, must be funded through assessed contributions by States Parties and not through voluntary contributions. Furthermore, India maintains that the budget of BWC must be supported through contributions by States Parties and not by non-State entities.

Mr Vice Chair

India has demonstrated during the pandemic that it has the will and the ability to contribute towards improving biological security.

India looks forward to productive and pragmatic outcomes at this Prep Com that will lay the groundwork for a successful Review Conference. We look forward to working under your guidance and wish the meeting all success.

Thank you.