Mr. Chairman,

1. Over the past twelve months, we have witnessed unprecedented achievements in the extraordinary effort to eliminate Syria’s chemical weapons; the complete destruction of Category 1 chemicals and the near completion of destruction of Category 2 chemicals. These developments constitute a significant step toward the complete dismantlement of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, and I would like to thank all the staff members of the Joint Mission and Special Coordinator Sigrid Kaag for their courage, dedication, and hard work. The work of the Joint Mission has set an excellent precedent for close collaboration to achieve the shared goal of disarmament.

2. Despite the achievements, however, my delegation is deeply concerned over the Fact-Finding Mission’s discovery of the use of chlorine gas in the village located in northern Syria. My government supports the ongoing efforts of the OPCW to clarify any discrepancy in the declaration of the Syrian government and the continued work of the Fact-Finding Mission.

3. In order to prevent the use of chemical weapons, achieving universal adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) remains a key priority and my delegation appreciates the efforts of the OPCW in this regard. The Republic of Korea urges all those that have not yet joined the Convention, including the DPRK, to do so without delay and join the united efforts to free the world of chemical weapons.
Mr. Chairman,

4. Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is the first international convention to ban a certain type of weapon of mass destruction and stands as an important landmark in the history of international disarmament efforts. However, the BWC regime faces unique challenges with advances in biotechnology and life sciences, as well as the inherently dual-use nature and widespread availability of this technology. My delegation is deeply concerned over the recent report that the ISIL’s laptop contained massive data on biological weapons, including instructions on how to obtain deadly toxin ricin from castor beans.

5. In light of increasing potential threats, the BWC needs to be reinforced if it is to adequately address these challenges while still guaranteeing the peaceful use of biotechnology. This requires innovative thinking which is different from traditional arms control approach, and is multifaceted both at the regional and international levels.

6. It is my delegation’s consistent view that our efforts to strengthen the BWC regime should start with an effective implementation of the Convention, inter alia, enacting and enforcing appropriate national legislative measures. In this regard, the Republic of Korea jointly proposed a working paper on national implementation with other like-minded countries at the 2014 BWC Meeting of Experts. It is our sincere hope that this working paper could be a useful basis for further discussion on this matter.

7. Universality of the Convention is another pillar for a stronger BWC regime. In this regard, my delegation welcomes Myanmar’s recent progress in the ratification of the Convention. We believe that raising awareness will substantially complement States’ efforts to strengthen the BWC regime.
8. The Republic of Korea strongly supports the strengthened inter-sessional process as agreed at the 7th BWC Review Conference in 2011. It is our hope that through this inter-sessional process, common understanding is furthered and concrete measures are explored for effective action in the run up to the 8th BWC Review Conference in 2016.

9. We found the theme of this year’s inter-sessional discussions, assistance and cooperation, especially timely and adequate. The provision of assistance and cooperation with relevant organizations in the case of an alleged use of biological weapons is very important considering the real risk of misuse of advanced life sciences. The discussions on how to strengthen the implementation of Article VII indeed provide an opportunity for the international community to prepare for one of the most pressing challenges of our time. My delegation hopes to carry forward substantive discussions through the inter-sessional process toward further progress at the upcoming 8th Review Conference.

10. Finally, my delegation believes that the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), launched this year through the initiative of the US, will contribute to establishing multi-sectoral coordination at the domestic level and cooperation with other countries and international organizations. My government supports this initiative and will host a GHSA ministerial level meeting in Seoul next year. We hope that efforts to strengthen the BWC implementation and other regional and international initiatives generate mutually reinforcing synergy, thereby enabling us to enhance our capacity against biological threats. /END/