Mr. Chairperson,

Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and their non-proliferation cannot be done without close national and international cooperation. Finland supports the central role of the UN in preventing the proliferation of WMD, and stresses the importance of implementation of UNSCR 1540. Since 2006 Finland has worked closely with Henry L. Stimson Center promoting the implementation of and universal adherence to the resolution 1540.

The enhancement of biosecurity and countering biological threats are a vital element of global non-proliferation agenda. Finland pursues close cooperation between the national and international health and security authorities when responding to questions related to biosecurity. Nationally Finland emphasises and invests in interagency cooperation. Since 2003 Finland has been a member of G8 Global Partnership. Through GP, we are looking at ways to advance biosecurity globally.

Besides non-proliferation, Finland underlines the importance of disarmament mechanisms. Finland is a strong supporter of strengthening of the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention (BTWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Full universality of both Conventions is yet to be achieved. It is pertinent that all members of the international community effectively work towards universality.

CWC constitutes a near universal regime with 190 states parties. Nevertheless, more work needs to done. 16 years after the entry-into-force of the CWC, 20% of the stockpiles of chemical warfare agents are still left to be eliminated.

Today, in conjunction with eliminating existing stockpiles, it is instrumental that implementation of CWC is carried out even more persistently as the OPCW and the UN work together to take stock and destruct chemical weapons in Syria.
Finland gives its full support to the OPCW and the UN’s important task in Syria. We would like to reiterate that Finland stands ready to contribute to the Joint Mission.

As OPCW’s designated laboratory, the Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention, VERIFIN, has supported the Syria efforts by providing laboratory assistance to Åke Sellström’s UN investigation mission. The government of Finland values the trust that has been given to VERIFIN.

One might ask how should the international community maintain and strengthen CWC treaty compliance. On Tuesday 29th of October the Permanent Mission of Finland to the UN will organise a side event titled “The Challenge of Chemical Weapons” which tackles this question. Speakers from UNODA, VERIFIN and OPCW will address lessons learned from Syria and the role of the OPCW designated laboratories in arms control. Ideally, this event provides a forum for discussion on the future of CWC.

I will finish by reiterating that Finland places great importance to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and disarmament. We have sought vigorously to support international efforts and we continue to do so in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.