Director-General Üzümcü,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to greet the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The Convention is critical part of the international disarmament architecture. In the past year, it has taken important strides towards universality. At the same time, the international norm against chemical weapons has been challenged as never before.

I call upon those States that are not yet a Party to the CWC to accede to it at the earliest possible date.

I would also like to reiterate the importance of continuing to strengthen partnership with the chemical industry. This allows concerns over safety and security to be addressed. And it facilitates the enormous technological and economic benefits that chemicals make possible.

Chemical weapons have not been consigned to the past. Recently in Syria, they have inflicted terror and death, including on civilians and children.

There can be no justification for the use of such weapons by any party, under any circumstances. One outcome from these horrific events is the strengthened partnership between the United Nations and the OPCW. The recently established OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) is now fully operational. I trust that it will be successful in identifying those responsible for the use of chemical weapons. The international community must hold the perpetrators to account.

I wish you a productive conference.

Thank you.