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RUSSIAN FEDERATION

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE COLLECTIVE SECURITY TREATY ORGANIZATION DELIVERED BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES

We are delivering this statement on behalf of the members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) that are States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (“the Convention”).

Firmly dedicated to a world free of chemical weapons and the creation of conditions that would hinder the re-emergences of this lethal type of weapon of mass destruction, the Member States of the CSTO are troubled by the current state of affairs within the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), in particular, the processes that are destabilising the effective, well-coordinated work of the Organisation.

We cannot agree with the draft decision presented for consideration by the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference on declaring the Syrian Arab Republic a violator of the Convention and depriving it of its rights and privileges under the Convention. We believe that attempts to legitimise the dubious and biased conclusions of the report by the Investigation and Identification Team—an illegitimate body that is outside of the scope of the Convention’s provisions, established in order to exert political pressure on certain States Parties to the Convention—are behind this. For the first time in the OPCW’s history, a strategy is being executed to make accusations—without any grounds upheld by compelling, confirming facts—blaming a fully-fledged member of the Organisation of failing to carry out its obligations under the Convention, and imposing sanctions against it.

On the other hand, it is puzzling that the Secretariat is ignoring the case of the recent use of hazardous chemicals in a regional conflict, causing damage to people and the environment that is commensurate with damages inflicted from the use of chemical weapons. The Secretariat is obliged to respond to requests from States Parties in these types of cases and immediately take action in line with the norms of the Convention.

Without a doubt, such dangerous precedents will harm the Organisation, and cast a shadow on the image of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate that was recognised as a leading international body acting in the interests of chemical disarmament and non-proliferation. They will have a negative impact on the appeal of the Convention for the countries that remain outside the framework of this international treaty.



We see a serious problem in the use of the platform of the OPCW to propagate unfounded, provocative assertions lacking substantiation with any real facts concerning the possession, hidden stockpiles, and use of chemicals by certain States Parties to the Convention—including individual citizens. The goal of promoting one's own far-reaching geopolitical interests are visible behind these actions, and they are casting doubt upon the authority of the Organisation.

We are convinced that it is unacceptable to hold a conversation based on a language of ultimatums and unsubstantiated claims, while ignoring the norms and procedures of the Convention, which prescribe cooperation and the making of every necessary effort to resolve any emergent issues regarding compliance via consultations and dialogue.

The initiatives that go beyond the scope of the Convention—the implementation of which requires that amendments be made in line with Article XV—give rise to serious concern. These include the proposal to take a decision—without any substantial discussion—on certain “understandings” regarding the use of aerosolised central nervous system-acting substances for law enforcement purposes. We believe that these types of steps lead to the erosion of the pillars of the Convention and turn it into an amorphous mechanism, thus allowing for the free interpretation of the document's provisions, depending on the stance and preferences of one State Party or another.

The Convention does not set out any prohibition of the use of these types of substances, and some of the are widely used in medicine, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and other industries for purposes not prohibited by the Convention. To begin with, we propose to define a conceptual body, at an expert level, and agree upon a list of these types of substances, and then return to considering this matter.

We are convinced that it stands to strive deliberately and unconditionally to achieve the common, unifying goal: strengthening the regime of chemical disarmament and non-proliferation of chemical weapons. It is necessary to exert maximum efforts in order to retain the integrity of the Convention, and to prevent the continued destructive politicisation of the work of the OPCW. Only in this way will we be able to move forward and strengthen the Convention, which is one of the fundamental treaties in the architecture of international security and disarmament.

We request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference and published on the Organisation's extranet and website.