



OPCW

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SAUDI ARABIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ZIAD BIN MAASHI AL ATIYAH
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA TO
THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome and congratulate you, Excellency Chairperson, Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki of the Kingdom of Morocco on your election as Chairperson of the Executive Council. I am confident that your outstanding professional experience and great wisdom will contribute to the success of this session, and we voice our support for the effort to ensure its success. I would like to express our appreciation to the Director-General for his comprehensive report, as well as to all staff members of the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation. I also welcome the statement delivered by Ambassador Fikrat Akhundov, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

Convinced of the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention, my country attaches great importance to implementing its obligations under the Convention, in keeping with its consistent policy aimed at promoting cooperation in the prohibition and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including making the Middle East region free from all weapons of mass destruction. My country also attaches great importance to achieving the universality of the Convention in view of its role in enhancing international peace and security. We urge States that have not yet done so to join the Convention.

My country's delegation stresses that the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as weapons anywhere, by anyone, and under any circumstances is deplorable and completely inconsistent with the provisions of the Convention and with the legal norms and standards of the international community.

Despite the progress made in the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, the discrepancies and inconsistencies in Syria's initial declaration and subsequent submissions are a source of concern for us. My country's delegation calls on the Syrian authorities to cooperate with the Declaration Assessment Team and the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW in order to implement all decisions relating to chemical weapons use in Syria.



In this context, my country's delegation welcomes the second report of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) on the perpetrators of chemical weapons use in Syria. My country's delegation voices its firm position, as well as its denunciation and condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by anyone and the need to bring the perpetrators of such use to account. My country's delegation reaffirms its support for the work of the IIT and calls on the Syrian authorities to cooperate with the team and to enable it to enter the Syrian territory.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about extraordinary circumstances that made the OPCW adopt measures and precautions consistent with those extraordinary circumstances. In order to enable the Executive Council to convene regularly in emergency circumstances, the proposal by the Federal Republic of Germany is both timely and appropriate, calling for an Executive Council decision to allow for convening Executive Council meetings and sessions remotely, using virtual meeting technology, or at another venue in The Hague. In this connection, my country's delegation is pleased to express its support and enthusiasm for the German proposal, as it lays the foundation for a statutory mechanism for the Council to meet regularly and fills a procedural gap. We call upon all members of the Executive Council to support and adopt the proposal by consensus in order to facilitate the work of our august council in emergency circumstances.

In conclusion, Mr Chairperson, the Convention stresses the importance of economic and technological development, as well as international cooperation in chemical activities for purposes not prohibited thereunder. While acknowledging efforts made in the past, we believe that more efforts are urgently needed in order to meet the requirements of Article XI of the Convention, in particular with respect to the transfer to developing States of technology, equipment, and expertise in chemical industries not prohibited under the Convention, as well as the removal of barriers imposed by many States in this regard. This will help promote international economic development for the benefit of all.

I request that this statement be considered an official document of this session and posted on the external server and public website of the Organisation.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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