

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Alireza Kazemi Abadai
of the Islamic Republic of Iran on Agenda Item on 7(c) entitled
“Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme”
at the Ninety-Ninth Session of
the Executive Council**

Madam Chairperson,

The Syrian Arab Republic joined the CWC in 2013 and immediately thereafter started constructive cooperation with the Technical Secretariat. It destroyed all its 27 chemical weapons production facilities in an unprecedented manner while its territory was in a state of unrest and conflict.

As of today, Syria has submitted the Ninety-Ninth monthly reports on its activities related to the destruction of chemical weapons and production facilities and provided supplementary information and materials, and collaborated with the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) through twenty-four rounds of consultations, with the aim of addressing the remaining technical outstanding issues. This process resulted in tangible progress and the closure of some outstanding issues, for which we are thankful to both sides.

It's irrefutable that Syria has repeatedly welcomed the OPCW's deployment of the DAT for the twenty-fifth round of consultations. It has welcomed all members of the team and expressed willingness to grant them the necessary visas immediately, except for one member of the team on whom Syria has reservations. While recognizing that Syria is exercising its sovereign rights and this is not unprecedented in the cooperation record between Syria and the Organization, my delegation encourages both sides to solve the issue with good faith and according to the previous practice.

We believe that such a minor issue should not hamper or endanger the whole cooperation process.

Madam Chairperson,

The reports and activities of the Fact-Finding Missions (FFMs) in Syria should be of technical nature, depoliticized, based on validated information and reliable sources, and carried out on the basis of impartiality and professionalism. However, in its reports on chemical incidents of Marea (1 and 3 September 2015) and Kafr Zeita (1 October 2016), the main sources of FFM were videos, photographs, and files allegedly gathered by non-state entities which at least are not reliable, independent and impartial. Such practice may inadvertently compromise the technical and depoliticized nature of the reports and activities of the Fact-Finding Mission.

Syria, as a State Party, is entitled to raise its questions and concerns over the procedure and working methods of the Technical Secretariat and its teams. In this regard, we urge the two sides to continue the current cooperation to reach a common understanding of how to resolve the outstanding issues.

Last but not least, Syria for several times has affirmed its readiness to hold the high-level meeting between the foreign minister Mikdad and the Director-General of the Organization as soon as possible. This meeting could be a decent opportunity to address the questions on working methods, the terms of reference, other pertinent matters, and the future road map of the cooperation between the two sides.

Thank You, Madam Chairperson