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NEW ZEALAND

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SUSANNAH GORDON
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE 100TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

Aotearoa New Zealand joins in acknowledgement of it being the 100th Executive Council meeting of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons – and there is much to reflect on. As a membership of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention), we continue to make strides in our pursuit of a world free of chemical weapons. We are pleased with the progress of the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre) build, and the resource it will provide for our future work in responding to chemical threats and providing capacity-building training for Member States. The Technical Secretariat also continues to work independently, with impartiality and with our full confidence. At this milestone meeting, however, we need to be clear that much work remains ahead of us.

Over recent years, we have seen a number of violations of the Convention and of the global norms at its heart, in particular the prohibition against the use of chemical weapons. We have seen politically motivated attacks on the independence, transparency and impartiality of the Technical Secretariat. And we are seeing an increase in mis- and dis-information campaigns designed to undermine the Organisation, sow confusion among Member States and distract attention away from serious questions regarding compliance with the Convention.

Aotearoa New Zealand condemns, unequivocally, the unprovoked and unjustified attack by the Russian Federation on Ukraine. This act of aggression is a grave breach of international law. We remain very concerned about the possibility of the weaponisation of chemicals against the civilian population of Ukraine. In a chorus of voices, Aotearoa New Zealand calls on Russia to cease all military operations in Ukraine; to immediately and permanently withdraw; and to cease its efforts to undermine the prohibitions and norms against chemical weapons use.

We continue to urge the Russian Federation to cooperate fully with the international community and the OPCW to provide answers about the poisoning of Mr Alexei Navalny. At the same time, we continue to condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic. We remind Syria of its obligations following the adoption of the April decision ‘Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic’ and urge Syria to comply with the decision of the Conference of the States Parties without delay.



Aotearoa New Zealand continues to concretely support the work of the Organisation, including through a visit by New Zealand's Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control, Hon Mr Phil Twyford, in June 2022. As part of the visit, the Minister announced additional voluntary contributions to two Trust Funds supporting the work of the OPCW: NZD 100,000 will support the OPCW Trust Fund for the Implementation of Article X (assistance and protection) in its ongoing assistance and protection programmes, with priority placed on providing assistance and protection to Ukraine in the case of the threat or use of chemical weapons; and NZD 80,000 will support the OPCW special fund for cybersecurity, business continuity and physical infrastructure security to increase the resilience of physical and cybersecurity of OPCW infrastructure and business continuity.

This is in addition to previous contributions made, including for the build of the ChemTech Centre. In the words of the Minister shared during his visit, "Aotearoa New Zealand is committed to disarmament and is confident that the new ChemTech Centre will enable the OPCW to future-proof its work, respond to the concerning re-emergence of chemical weapons, and enhance international cooperation". Thank you.

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