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FRANCE

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC TO THE OPCW AT THE 100TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL UNDER AGENDA ITEM 6(F)

Mr Chairperson,

It has been more than four years since the decision was adopted by a very large majority of the States Parties, respecting all of the rules and procedures and the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”).

And yet, we keep hearing the same criticisms and arguments.

Allow me to make once again a few remarks on this. I would recall that these points have already been made on several occasions.

1. We are told that the decision is not legitimate. False.

This decision is legitimate, since it was adopted by the most important policy-making organ of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)—the Conference of the States Parties—during a special session attended by 152 States Parties.

2. We are told that this decision was taken by a minority of the States Parties. False.

A two-thirds majority of those present and voting was required to adopt this decision. A total of 106 States voted, meaning that the requisite majority was 70 votes. Ultimately, 82 States Parties voted in favour of the decision, that is 77% of those present and voting. That amounts to more than three-fourths of the votes cast.

3. We are told that the June decision does not respect the provisions of the Convention. False.

From the moment there is confirmation of an allegation of use of chemical weapons, that constitutes a case of non-compliance with the Convention. Article VIII of the Convention clearly entrusts the OPCW with the role of ensuring compliance with the prohibition of use laid down in Article I of the Convention, to which we are all parties.

It is exactly in the opposite case, that is, if we prohibit the OPCW from taking up this issue, that the question of its legitimacy and credibility arises.



The procedure for adopting this decision cannot be contested; the substance of this decision even less so.

We call on all States Parties to accept this reality and to accept a decision that was adopted in compliance with all of the rules. I would also recall that the drafters of the Convention made provision for voting as a decision-making modality, by giving each State Party one vote in paragraph 17 of Article VIII, before mentioning consensus in paragraph 18 of Article VIII.

Believe me, we regret that consensus could not be reached on issues as serious as material breaches of the Convention, but we cannot stand idly by. The very credibility of the Convention and its implementation are at stake.

I would ask that this statement be considered as an official document of this session of the Executive Council and that it be posted on the public website and on Catalyst.

Thank you.

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