



OPCW

Executive Council

101st Session
4 – 6 October 2022

EC-101/NAT.34
4 October 2022
ENGLISH only

NEW ZEALAND

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SUSANNAH GORDON
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE 101ST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

Aotearoa New Zealand remains steadfast in calling for accountability and justice, and cooperation from all Member States in the OPCW. As reminded by Director-General Fernando Arias in the previous meeting of the Executive Council, the OPCW is a disarmament organisation that works for peace and international security, with humanitarian and environmental responsibilities. Embedded in the Preamble of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”), we, as States Parties, determined to act with a view to achieving effective progress towards general and complete disarmament, including the prohibition and elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Aotearoa New Zealand holds firm to this commitment and calls on others to do the same.

In this regard, we remind Syria of its obligations following the adoption of the 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.

We also 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. We are disappointed, yet again, that the Russian Federation does not have any developments to share.

Our work this week continues under the dark cloud of Russia’s unprovoked, unjustified, and illegal invasion of Ukraine. Russia’s so-called “referenda” in eastern and southern Ukraine constitute a new and additional act of aggression and a breach of fundamental rules of international law. We strongly condemn Russia’s actions, and we do not recognise Russia’s illegal attempts to change Ukraine’s borders or territorial sovereignty, including through annexation. As we have done at every level, consistently in this forum and others, 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 condemn unequivocally this invasion and continue to support Ukraine through a range of measures. We also call on all States Parties to redouble their commitment to the international rules-based order and to their commitments to disarmament. We are stronger together.

Despite the harmful actions of a few, there is much to look forward to in our work together.



We welcome the efforts of the Governments of Australia and Malaysia to host a subregional forum on national implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention for Pacific Island States. Aotearoa New Zealand considers ourselves one and of the Pacific, and having an opportunity to engage with, and learn from, our colleagues in the region is incredibly valuable. We look forward to contributing to the discussion during the forum, and more importantly, to applying what we learn to implement the Convention in our national jurisdictions.

We welcome the productive discussions we have had as a membership as we prepare for the Fifth Review Conference in 2023. We look forward to this continuing under the able leadership of Ambassador Kuusing of Estonia. We stand ready to work cooperatively to strengthen and safeguard the Convention to ensure it delivers for us in the decades ahead.

Ma whero ma pango ka oti ai te mahi.¹

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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Translation and meaning: “with red and black the work will be complete”. This lifts up the importance of cooperation, where if everyone does their part, the work will be complete. The colours refer to the traditional kowhaiwhai patterns on the inside of traditional meeting houses in New Zealand.