



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

STATEMENT BY H.E. JOŽEF DROFENIK, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA TO THE OPCW

27th Session of the Conference of the States Parties to The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction

Mr. Chairperson, Director-General Arias, Your Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to pay tribute to the chairpersons of the 26th Conference of the States Parties and of the Executive Council for their tireless efforts and skills in guiding the States Parties' work. I have full confidence that Ambassador Madonsela of the Republic of South Africa will take over the throttle of the Conference chair with equal competence and vigor. We wish him every success.

In addition to the statement delivered on behalf of the EU, I would like to offer a few remarks in my national capacity.

The aggressive behavior of a single country, Russian invasion of Ukraine, goes against everything we believe in. It is gross violation of the UN Charter and international law and is the very thing "the peoples of the United Nations" pledged to never again allow.

We are determined to stand against it. Not against Russia or its people, but against aggression towards one's neighbor, against attempt to take by force what is not yours, against violations of international law, and against impunity for international crimes.

The Russian Federation has long been recognized as an important actor in the world arena. In recognition of that role, it has held numerous prominent positions in the policy-making organs of the OPCW. But with power comes responsibility. Responsibility which Russia has turned its back on by attacking Ukraine. In view of this, we cannot in good conscience support its bid for the position of the Vice-Chairperson of this Conference, nor have it represent the Eastern European Electoral Group at this time.

Promoting respect for the international law, and accountability for international crimes, are among Slovenia's foreign policy priorities. We will continue to invest every effort in ensuring that breaking the law does not pay off and that justice prevails, including with respect to the norm against chemical weapons use.

We applaud OPCW's efforts in this regard, in particular through the work of the Fact Finding Mission and of the Investigation and Identification Team, and their highly professional investigations of chemical weapons use in Syria. Their work is invaluable for ensuring accountability and preventing reoccurrence.

We regret that Syria's cooperation with the OPCW has, for the most part, remained an unfulfilled promise. We call on Syrian authorities to change their approach and allow unfettered access to OPCW designated personnel, as mandated by the UN Security Council and this Conference, and to resolve the open issues of Syria's CWC declaration without further delays.

We also continue to call on Russia to clarify the circumstances of the poisoning of Alexei Navalny with a military grade nerve agent on its territory.

On a more positive note, this organization has a lot to be proud of. The sustained engagement of OPCW with chemical industry is vital to the non-proliferation efforts while it also greatly enhances chemical safety. Through the CWC, nearly all countries of the world have embraced the norm against chemical weapons. By the end of next year, all the declared chemical weapons stockpiles will have been verifiably destroyed.

Excellencies,

With the 5th Review Conference ahead of us, we must not lose sight of the greatest value of this organization - the immense knowledge and expertise embedded in it. We will continue to need this knowledge in the years to come, to keep the world safe from the threat that chemical weapons will continue to pose beyond the destruction deadline. We therefore welcome the – almost completed – construction of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology, and its future role as a repository of knowledge on the control of dangerous chemicals and on the prevention of their weaponization. Our thanks and congratulations go to Director-General Arias for this important achievement.

We also hope that the Review Conference will bring a resolution to ongoing discussions on issues such as business continuity and tenure policy, which – while technical – can serve to enhance the organization's effectiveness. Moreover, we call for further strengthening of the gender equality perspective in the work of the OPCW.

To conclude, Mr. Chairperson, let me stress that the job of protecting international law is never finished. Slovenia is ready to do its part. Firstly, by offering our unwavering support to the OPCW in its role as protector of the Chemical Weapons Convention and secondly, by building trust as a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

I kindly ask that this statement be considered as an official document of this session and for it to be posted on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you.