



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

THE NETHERLANDS

STATEMENT BY

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE

ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

CSP-27, 28 November – 2 December 2022

The Netherlands fully endorses the statement of the European Union.

Like many countries around the world, the Netherlands was shocked and appalled by the unprovoked and unjustified war that the Russian Federation launched against Ukraine at the beginning of this year. The war against Ukraine is a gross violation of international law, undermining the international rules-based order and the principles of multilateralism. Moreover, although it may be a war fought on European soil, the consequences of this irresponsible act of aggression are being felt around the globe; food and energy prices are skyrocketing, affecting the lives of people everywhere, and not least in developing countries.

The Russian Federation should be condemned in the strongest possible terms for starting this war. The Netherlands will do everything in its power to preserve the international rules-based order.

Once again, a year has gone by without much progress concerning the situation in Syria. The Syrian Arab Republic is still not fully complying with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. Moreover, it is refusing any cooperation with the Technical Secretariat to resolve the outstanding issues, despite several attempts by the Director-General to break the deadlock. The Netherlands supports the Director-General in his efforts, and urges him not to yield to the unfounded conditions that Syria is trying to impose before it will agree to resuming cooperation.

On another important issue, the poisoning of Mr Alexei Navalny and steps to redress the situation, there has been no progress whatsoever. OPCW Member States are still waiting for relevant information from the Russian Federation concerning the circumstances of the attack on Mr Navalny.

These matters are of grave concern to the Netherlands, as they are a sign that despite the successful efforts of all OPCW Member States to achieve the core vision of the Chemical Weapons Convention – ‘to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons’ – the threat of the re-emergence of the use of such weapons is real. These concerns are underlined by incidents in recent years where chemical weapons have been used.

This year the Netherlands initiated a joint statement on NGO accreditation to the CSP, which is co-sponsored by many Member States from different regions. In the view of the Netherlands and the co-sponsors, it is crucial that the widest possible range of NGOs be able to engage with the OPCW and contribute to the discussions at the CSP, in order to strengthen the goals and purpose of the OPCW. NGOs play a key role in supporting the global fight against the use of chemical weapons. Giving them the opportunity to share their expertise is in the interest of all Member States. The current practice in the General Committee – where NGOs can be blocked by States Parties without any explanation, whether to other Member States or the NGO in question – is not acceptable in a modern, transparent international organisation.

The Netherlands looks forward to the opening of the new Centre for Chemistry and Technology. The Netherlands commends the Technical Secretariat for completing the ChemTech Centre within the projected timeframe, despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The new Centre will be a vital component in the fulfilment of future OPCW tasks. We hope that States Parties across all regional groups will benefit from this important initiative.

Lastly, the Netherlands supports the proposal for the budget for 2023 to 2024. The OPCW must be funded appropriately to fulfil its functions in the years ahead. The Netherlands therefore urges all States Parties to agree to the proposed budget.

In conclusion, the Netherlands wishes to express its full confidence in the professionalism and impartiality of the Director-General and Technical Secretariat.

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