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### SWEDEN

#### **STATEMENT BY MS ANN-SOFIE NILSSON DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE KINGDOM OF SWEDEN AT THE FIFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

Mr Chairperson,  
Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me welcome you, H.E. Ambassador Henk Cor van der Kwast, as chairperson, and express our sincere thanks to H.E. Ambassador Lauri Kuusing for his admirable chairing the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference.

I also want to take this opportunity to express Sweden's appreciation to you, Director-General Fernando Arias, and to the staff of the OPCW. It is thanks to the strong commitment of all of you that the mission of this Organisation is carried out in such a commendable manner.

Sweden fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I will add a few remarks in my national capacity.

The Fifth Review Conference should be used to recognise the events and the achievements of the past five years and set out a strategic course for the years to come. On the one hand, we are very close to the complete and historical destruction of all declared chemical weapons. We celebrate the inauguration of the ChemTech Centre and its potential as a force multiplier across the Organisation's activities. On the other hand, we continue to face serious challenges to the international norm against the use of chemical weapons. The Syrian Arab Republic is still to reveal the full extent of its chemical weapons programme and to fully comply with the Convention. Russian authorities have, so far, failed to respond to demands of the international community to disclose the circumstances around the assassination attempt on Alexei Navalny.

Russia's unlawful and unjustified invasion of Ukraine rages on, involving continued attacks on Ukraine's industrial infrastructure, including chemical industrial plants, with severe risks for human and ecological disaster. We condemn Russia's illegal aggression and its continuous disinformation campaign. Sweden stands firm in its support to Ukraine. We welcome the Secretariat's work in providing equipment and training to Ukraine, enhancing their preparedness and response capabilities to incidents involving chemical warfare agents or toxic industrial chemicals.



We, the States Parties, must continue our efforts to ensure that the global ban on chemical weapons is respected, and that those who have used chemical weapons are identified and held to account.

In these efforts the OPCW will have to be strengthened and its capabilities further developed. The Organisation must remain a depository of knowledge and expertise, which can be called upon by the international community to address situations involving toxic chemicals in possible breach of the Convention. We need to ensure that the Organisation retains the best possible expertise in a highly competitive field, and therefore it is necessary to have a tenure policy that allows for extensions and rehiring of staff.

Sweden appreciates the efforts made by the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat to enhance women's equal participation and representation among its staff and strengthen gender mainstreaming holistically across the Organisation and its activities. We look forward to further steps to address the gaps and challenges that remain.

As my final point, I would urge all States Parties to be constructive and innovative at this Fifth Review Conference, to find the unity necessary to make real progress. The armistice after the Great War over 100 years ago and the end of the Second World War in 1945 raised expectations that we might one day see the eradication of chemical weapons. This endeavour was enshrined in the signing of this Convention in 1993 but has repeatedly been put to the test. Let us use this Conference and the years ahead to, once more, stake out a course towards a world free of chemical weapons. We owe this to the victims of these repugnant weapons.

I request that this statement be issued as an official document of the Fifth Review Conference and be published on the public website.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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