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ROMANIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR LUCIAN FĂTU
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ROMANIA TO THE OPCW 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,

It is with great pleasure that, on behalf of the Romanian delegation, I congratulate you, H.E. Ambassador van der Kwast, upon your election as Chairperson of this important Fifth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention Review (Fifth Review Conference) and assure you of the full support of my delegation.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to H.E. Ambassador Lauri Kuusing of Estonia, Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference. Likewise, I am pleased to express my appreciation to Director-General Fernando Arias, for his dedication and the way he managed the Organisation in these critical times.

Romania fully supports the European Union statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Marjolijn van Deelen, Special Envoy for Disarmament and non-proliferation at the European External Action Service (EEAS). In addition, I would like to underline a few issues from the national perspective.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is a stronghold of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation system, and we remain a firm advocate of multilateralism and international cooperation.

Romania reaffirms its support to all efforts to strengthen the Chemical Weapons Convention and its institutional capacity. In these times, this is more important than ever. We will not tire of acting to fulfil the primary objective of the Organisation, to eliminate all chemical weapons and to prevent their re-emergence. This Conference is an opportunity to agree on a common vision on countering the re-emergence of chemical weapons and safeguarding the global non-use norm.

We remain deeply concerned about the use of chemical weapons in Iraq, Malaysia, Syria, the United Kingdom, and the Russian Federation.



The recurrent use of chemical weapons sends a clear signal — the OPCW's role within the disarmament and non-proliferation framework remains crucial. Furthermore, the implementation, at the national level, of the decisions adopted at the level of the Conference of the States Parties remains an important element in this equation.

Romania stands firm in condemning the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances, and expresses its conviction that perpetrators must be held accountable.

We should not forget that the blatant Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine is a serious violation of international law and international commitments, including in connection with the Convention. In this context, we must continue to condemn all Russian disinformation campaigns, notably regarding allegations of provocations using chemical agents in Ukraine. We urge the Secretariat to continue to monitor the situation and to inform all States Parties about the developments.

Since the previous Review Conference, Romania was, and continues to be, in the group of the States Parties that condemned, in the strongest possible terms, the assassination attempt on Alexei Navalny, who was poisoned in Russia by a chemical nerve agent of the novichok group, as has been confirmed by three independent specialised laboratories from Germany, France and Sweden as well as by two OPCW designated laboratories following an OPCW technical assistance visit (TAV) (S/1906/2020, dated 6 October 2020).

We call upon the Russian Federation to fully cooperate with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to ensure an impartial international investigation in order to settle the matter.

Romania also reiterates its concern with regard to the remaining gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies in the declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic. Therefore, Romania is among the States Parties requesting the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW and clarify these outstanding issues. The Syrian Arab Republic needs to resolve the pending issues, declare the full extent of its chemical weapons programme, and return to full compliance with the Convention. The third report of the OPCW's Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) is more than worrisome.

The Fifth Review Conference must encourage the States Parties to take actions in order to counter chemical terrorism, including that practiced by non-State actors. We support the importance of strengthening the contribution of the OPCW to global efforts to combat chemical terrorism and prevent proliferation.

My delegation supports the improvement and strengthening of the verification system, as an essential instrument for the implementation of the Convention. Also, this is important to prevent the conversion of chemical production facilities for the purpose of producing chemical weapons.

We believe it is necessary to support the ongoing adaptation of the OPCW and technical teams to the progress of science and technology. This is the only way to ensure that the verification regime remains fit for purpose, and, to quote the Director-General, "fully effective and best prepared for future challenges."

In this context, Romania supported, politically and financially, the project of the transformation of the OPCW laboratory into a Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre). This important centre will enhance the Organisation's capacity to perform its core tasks in verification, inspection and capacity building. The inauguration of the ChemTech Centre is a real success story and now we have to cooperate for the maximum use of this opportunity.

Romania has always had a constructive approach in promoting the Convention's full implementation. Thus, a concrete example is our support for the decision stating that the aerosolised use of the central nervous system-acting chemicals (CNS-acting chemicals) is inconsistent with law enforcement purposes as a "purpose not prohibited" under the Convention.

One of the initiatives on the table, co-sponsored by Romania, is a real bridge between verification and international cooperation and assistance — the sea-dumped chemical weapons. For us, it is important to promote risk assessments related to the sea-dumped chemical weapons in order to mitigate the risks regarding that kind of old chemical weapons. In this context, we support the broadening of the international cooperation on sea-dumped chemical weapons and promoting the OPCW as a forum for voluntary consultation and cooperation on this issue.

Romania considers it necessary for the OPCW Technical Secretariat to continue its efforts to provide assistance for fulfilling the obligations arising from Article VII of the Convention. It is important to support the development of international cooperation to help build national capabilities and to ensure robust national implementation of the Convention. Romania is a permanent supporter of assistance and protection programmes run by the OPCW.

We underline the importance of the full implementation of the Convention. We call upon all remaining States not Party to ratify or accede to, and fully implement the Convention without delay. Our efforts shall remain firm until full universalisation of the Convention has been achieved and the world's entire population lives under the protection of the Convention, but such efforts will be useless if States Parties will not give up statements and actions that undermine the authority and credibility of the OPCW as a whole, as well as undermine the technical teams.

Romania reiterates its full confidence in the OPCW Technical Secretariat, its professionalism, impartiality and well-established technical expertise in implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention and tasks assigned by the States Parties. We remain steadfast in defending the Organisation against deliberate and baseless attacks on its integrity and credibility.

Before concluding, I want to welcome the presence of the representatives of international non-governmental organisations. The OPCW should increase public awareness of the dangers of chemical weapons and the importance of the Convention. In this regard, we need more transparency and clarity in relation to civil society, including academia. We must fully cooperate with civil society, in order to strengthen its resilience, including through the full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

I would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document of the Fifth Review Conference and have it published on the OPCW external server and the public website.

Thank you.