



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden

National statement by Sweden
One Hundred and Third Session of the Executive Council
of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
H.E. Ambassador Johannes Oljelund
Permanent Representative of Sweden to the OPCW
The Hague, 11-14 July 2023

Chair,

Sweden associates itself with the statement made by Spain on behalf of the European Union. The following additional remarks are made in a national capacity.

We have recently completed the Fifth Review Conference. Despite a thorough and inclusive preparatory process, and a well-balanced draft as basis for negotiations, it was not possible to agree on an outcome document. Many delegations worked constructively to build consensus – a few lacked the genuine political will to find compromises. Even if the conference itself will be deemed a missed opportunity to take stock of the past years and provide guidance for the future, there were fruitful discussions and points of convergence to take forward. Sweden will continue to engage in these efforts.

When moving forward, we have to continue to bear in mind the holistic and balanced approach that has guided States Parties to this point. Initiatives to promote geographical diversity in the Technical Secretariat were linked to a more flexible tenure policy, and continued work is needed on gender mainstreaming.

Chair,

Russia's unlawful and unjustified invasion of Ukraine rages on. Sweden condemns in the strongest terms this brutal and unprovoked aggression and Russia's continued disinformation and false accusations directed at Ukraine regarding preparations for both chemical and biological provocations. We welcome the Secretariat's work in providing equipment and training to Ukraine, enhancing preparedness and response capabilities to incidents involving Chemical Warfare Agents or Toxic Industrial Chemicals. Sweden will this year contribute SEK 3 million (€257 000) to the Article X Trust Fund to support these crucial activities.

Chair,

The fact that the Syrian Arab Republic continues its stance of non-cooperation with the OPCW is unacceptable. The decision of the Conference of the States Parties at its Twenty-Fifth Session to suspend the voting rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic was an appropriate response to a continued violation of the Convention. Only the Syrian Arab Republic can take the steps needed to redress the situation. We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to reveal the full extent of its chemical weapons programme and to fully comply with the Convention.

Sweden reiterates its full support for the work of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). We continue to follow the reporting of the FFM and the IIT closely, as crucial steps towards accountability for the use of chemical weapons. We commend the relentless efforts of the DAT to ensure that the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic can be considered accurate and complete. Non-compliance can never be tolerated. We call on the Syrian Arab Republic to fully cooperate with the Organization and its Technical Secretariat.

As a sign of Sweden's commitment to ensure accountability for the use of chemical weapons, Sweden continues to support this necessary work, this year by contributing SEK 2 million (€171 000) to the OPCW Trust Fund for Syria Missions.

Chair,

It is deeply regretful that we, at yet another meeting, must conclude that Russia continues to deny involvement in the 2020 attempted assassination of Alexei Navalny with a Novichok nerve agent, and continues to refuse to cooperate with the OPCW to ensure an impartial international investigation into the incident. The questions that were put to the Russian Federation by 45 States Parties in October 2021 remain unanswered.

Sweden reiterates that it is the responsibility of all States, including the Russian Federation, to ensure respect for the global ban on chemical weapons and accountability for the use of chemical weapons.

I would kindly ask that this statement be issued as an official document and placed on the public website.

Thank you.