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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ROBERT P. MIKULAK
UNITED STATES DELEGATION TO THE OPCW
AT THE SEVENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

In opening this Seventy-Second Session of the Executive Council, Madam Chairperson, we wish to express our appreciation for your dynamic leadership of the Council and to assure you that you can continue to count on the full support of my delegation.

Madam Chairperson, Mr Director-General, distinguished delegates,

I believe it is an excellent idea to focus on a specific issue during the general debate, and at this session to reflect on the Third Review Conference. Our overall assessment of the Review Conference is on balance, positive.

First, we were quite satisfied with the overall process leading up to the Review Conference, as well as the work on the final document during the Conference. The entire process was transparent and built on broad participation by delegations. Divergent views came much closer on a significant Conference goal, which was to establish a roadmap for the Organisation for the next five years. We agreed on the need to ensure that the OPCW remains the global repository of chemical weapons disarmament expertise, as well as on the need to keep a close eye on developments in science and technology.

Second, the States Parties achieved solid texts in the final report on chemical weapons destruction, verification, chemical industry issues, economic and technological cooperation, and the functioning of the Organisation, among other issues.

Third, the broadened participation of civil society in the Third Review Conference was well received. The various speakers were competent professionals who made useful contributions to our deliberations. The practice of including civil society participation should be adopted at every session of the Conference of the States Parties, in addition to the Review Conferences. I am hopeful that in the future we will see more participation by the chemical industry, as it is the sector of civil society which is subject to monitoring requirements, and thus is a key stakeholder under the Convention.

On the less positive side, we too are disappointed that time ran out before final agreement could be reached on language relating to substances termed "incapacitating chemical agents". The United States believes that agreement on language is within reach. We will work closely and intensively with the Swiss and other delegations so that this important discussion can



continue. In this context, I also wish very clearly and directly to reconfirm that the United States is not developing, producing, stockpiling, or using incapacitating chemical agents.

Although the Review Conference devised balanced language on international cooperation and assistance, the text relating to national implementation measures did not fare as well. It is not a true reflection of reality: every one of us should be concerned that more than half of the States Parties have not fully put in place the implementing measures required by the Convention. We are particularly concerned that 15 States Parties that have declared industry facilities have not done so. Although my delegation certainly understands that a Member State may face challenges in fully implementing the Convention, we remain concerned that national implementation is simply not a priority for a number of States Parties.

In addition, the United States delegation also was not satisfied with the physical arrangements for the Review Conference. We must have physical arrangements better suited to large conferences, where the delegates from more than 100 States Parties—all of whom want to contribute—can be appropriately accommodated.

But the most important issue facing the OPCW, and the most glaring shortcoming of the Review Conference, Madam Chairperson, was the fact that the Review Conference did not achieve adequate language on the matter of Syria's chemical weapons and their potential use in Syria's raging conflict. The final document did not refer to the United Nations Secretary-General's call for all serious claims of chemical weapons use to be examined "without delay, without preconditions, and without exception." We could not even manage to mention the Secretary General's historic presence at the Review Conference. He called for continued strong support from the OPCW and emphasised the responsibility of Syrian authorities to assure the international community of the security of its chemical weapons stockpiles. This outcome is a disgrace, as is the inability to simply reconfirm all the elements that the Executive Council agreed upon on March 27.

It behooves this Council to continue to call upon the Syrian regime to cooperate with the United Nations, having itself called upon the United Nations to investigate the alleged use of chemical weapons. The United States reiterates the Secretary General's call for the Syrian Government to assure the international community of the security of its chemical weapons, to cooperate fully with the United Nations, including with the ongoing investigation of the potential use of chemical weapons, and to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention without delay so that these weapons can be destroyed under OPCW verification.

I believe the Third Review Conference was a milestone in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The final report should become a "living" document in the sense that the policy-making organs should continue to focus on implementation of the decisions and commitments we collectively made at the Review Conference. I hope we can all agree to have a regular agenda item at each Executive Council session to review a topic covered at the Review Conference. In the Political Declaration (Part A), we committed to keeping our declarations under review at each Conference of the States Parties. The Executive Council must enable the Conference to do just that by reviewing selected parts of Parts A and B of the Review Conference final report at each session.

Before I conclude, I would like to express the appreciation of my delegation for your leadership of the Council over the last year. It has been a successful and productive year with

a solid record of achievement in substance and in improvement of the Council's working methods. Your work has left an important legacy.

In closing, I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Seventy-Second Session of the Council.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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