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**POLAND**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DR JAN BORKOWSKI  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF POLAND TO THE OPCW AT THE  
SEVENTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Director-General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,

Poland fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

At the outset of my intervention I would like to stress that the Seventy-Eighth Session of the Executive Council is the last one for Poland as its member during the 2013-2015 tenure. This function has been great honour for my country. I would like to take the opportunity to express appreciation to the Director-General, the Technical Secretariat staff and all delegations for their cooperation. The last two years were unique for the Council. It witnessed awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Organisation and also made unprecedented decisions that paved the way to chemical demilitarisation in the Syrian Arab Republic.

However during that period the OPCW has also been challenged by the need to maintain its relevance and credibility in light of repeated use of toxic chemicals as a chemical weapon. Poland regrets that the Council was unable to preserve consensus on this matter but at the same time we think that inaction would cause even greater damage to the credibility of the Organisation. We hope that lessons learned from this situation will strengthen the Council.

In the coming months and years it will have to manage the transformation of the OPCW to ensure that it will be able to effectively prevent re-emergence of chemical weapons. In order to accomplish this task the Council must not only be able to take technical decisions but also provide political guidance to the Organisation. In this context Poland welcomes the vision paper “the OPCW in 2025” that builds on the recommendations of the Third Review Conference and provides additional food for thought for States Parties.

One of challenges to the effectiveness of prohibition of chemical weapons is posed by non-state actors, such as terrorists. Albeit the OPCW is not an anti-terrorism Organisation it has to take all means necessary to prevent the use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances. Developments of the past months have clearly shown that the threat of use of chemical weapons by non-state actors is not illusory. Therefore Poland encourages the



Technical Secretariat to continue to utilise provisions of Articles VII, X and XI to strengthen the OPCW's posture against terrorism. Likewise it is also important that the OPCW actively engage relevant international organisations in that field. Therefore we support the Technical Secretariat's involvement with the CTITF and United Nations 1540 Committee. We also encourage the continued OPCW contribution in the framework of Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. It allows for better coordination of national, regional and global initiatives that are aimed at preventing and/or responding to the misuse of chemicals. This will remain a priority for Poland as the co-chair of the chemical security and safety working group within the Global Partnership.

The Third Review Conference terminated without finding agreement on the substances termed "incapacitating chemical agents". Since then the issue has not lost its significance, on the contrary, many countries expressed hope and determination to address this problem that can potentially damage the Chemical Weapons Convention. In this context I have the honor to announce that Poland restricts the use of toxic chemicals for law enforcement purposes exclusively to riot control agents and is not developing, producing, stockpiling, or using incapacitating chemical agents.

I am also pleased to inform that the National Authority of the Republic of Poland introduced the Secure Information Exchange system. We expect that the appropriate documentation on the 2014 production will be transferred for the first time through this channel.

Before concluding I would like to express our appreciation to the outgoing facilitator for Article X issues – Ms Sarah Broughton of the United Kingdom for her professionalism and efficient conduct of facilitations on this important matter since the Seventieth Session of the Executive Council. We wish her every success in future assignments.

I will end my intervention on a historical note. In about a month in Ieper we will mark the centenary of the first large scale chemical weapons attack. The same chlorine gas was also released on the Eastern Front of the Great War in Bolimów just 50 kilometers west of Warsaw on the 31 May 1915. This fact is mostly unknown both internationally and locally. Therefore in Bolimów only the oldest citizens can repeat stories they heard from their ancestors. There is no museum, only trenches hidden in the woods, and unnamed mass graves of fallen soldiers. In order to revive this memory we decided to take part in the exhibition that the Director-General is opening today. I would also like to invite all interested delegates to the screening of the film on Bolimów that has been produced under the Fires Project by the OPCW with the support of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The premiere will take place on Wednesday at 2 p.m. in the Ieper room.

I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Seventy-Eighth Session of the Executive Council.

Thank you.

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