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TURKEY

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF TURKEY
AT THE SEVENTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

I would like to thank Mr Director-General Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for his extensive update today.

On this occasion, I would like to join all the good wishes for you as this is your last regular session you will be chairing.

I also wish Deputy Director-General Ambassador Madame Grace Asirwatham all the best in her future endeavours.

As Turkey has underlined in the previous sessions, the complete elimination of the chemical weapons in Syria should remain a cardinal priority for the States Parties and this Organisation.

Our delegation has expressed our deep concern with respect to several aspects of this process, namely continuous use of chlorine by the regime forces in Syria against the civilians, the slow pace of progress in destruction of 12 chemical weapons production facilities and serious gaps, discrepancies and inconsistencies in Syria's declaration.

We welcome the fact that the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) provided the States Parties with a third report outlining its work up until today. My capital will carefully study this report too.

Clearly, the discrepancies, gaps and inconsistencies in the Syrian declarations point out to the fact that the mission of total elimination chemical weapons in Syria is far from over.

We must face this reality instead of ignoring it. This is all the more significant as this year marks the centenary of the first large scale use of chemical weapons in Ieper.

Turkey believes the DAT's efforts need further attention of the international community.

We very much look forward to the briefing to be delivered by the Declaration Assessment Team.



Team's efforts are also of critical importance due to the fact that Syria should never have the capability to use or produce chemical weapons in future.

I would like to reiterate our firm conviction that the use of chemical weapons by a State Party or anyone is unacceptable. The Third Report of the Fact-Finding Mission once again laid bare the compelling evidence of use of toxic chemicals in Syria by the regime forces.

Both the Executive Council decision of the Forty-Eighth Session and the United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015) confirmed and condemned use of chlorine in Syria.

The FFM's continuation of its work on unabated use of chlorine in Syria is of utmost significance. There is no room for complacency as far as the complete elimination of the chemical weapons in Syria is concerned. On this occasion, I wish to once again call upon all the States Parties to be on the right side of the history.

There must be consequences for any party, a State or a non-state actor, who uses chemical weapons and the perpetrators should be held accountable.

Finally, we wish to underscore that the destruction of the remaining chemical weapons production facilities in Syria must be completed without further delay.

I would like to request that this statement be treated as an official document of this session of the Executive Council and be posted on the external server and the website.

Thank you.

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