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GERMANY

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DR CHRISTOPH ISRANG
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY TO THE OPCW
AT THE SEVENTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman, Mr Director-General, distinguished colleagues,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

My delegation welcomes you in the chair and offers you its support throughout your term in office. We would also like to use this opportunity to thank the outgoing Deputy Director-General for all her efforts and to wish her all the best for her future. We welcome her successor and stand ready to closely cooperate with him.

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union by H.E. Mr Pierre-Louis Lorenz, Permanent Representative of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. It goes without saying that he can count on the full support of the German delegation. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Latvia and the Latvian Ambassador for the excellent work throughout the Latvian EU Presidency.

Only recently, the Security Council of the United Nations has again discussed the violence against civilians in the Syrian Arab Republic. Together with many other countries, Germany has strongly deplored and condemned the indiscriminate use of weapons that so many civilians have fallen victim to. Unfortunately, this includes allegations of the use of chemical weapons by a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention. The use of chlorine as a weapon has to stop – not only because of the Convention, but simply for the sake of humanity. We expect the Fact-Finding Mission to report to the States Parties on all allegations of the use of chlorine as a weapon. Due to the gravity of the matter, the OPCW must continue to be in close contact with the Security Council of the United Nations, as it must be ensured that those responsible for the use of toxic chemicals as a weapon are held accountable and finally brought to justice. Syrian authorities have to comply with their obligations under the Convention and relevant decisions of the Security Council and this Council. This also refers to the question, whether the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic was correct and complete. Unfortunately, the excellent work of the Declaration Assessment Team has not shortened, but prolonged the list of concerns, inconsistencies and open questions. To be very clear: without a credible assurance that the Syrian chemical weapons programme has been completely and irreversibly destroyed, without sufficient confidence that the Syrian Arab Republic is in full compliance with its obligations, we will not be able to close this file.



It is particularly sad that we have to discuss all of this in a year when we remember the first massive use of chemical weapons 100 years ago in Ypres on 22 April 1915 in World War I. 2015 marks the same sad anniversary of chemical weapons use on the Eastern front. I went to the region of Bolimów in Poland to pay tribute to the victims on 31 May 2015.

Later this year, we would like to remember two more historic events: One hundred years ago, Clara Immerwahr died. She was one of the first German women to obtain a PhD in chemistry and she had openly opposed the misuse of the science of chemistry for non-peaceful purposes. In the second half of this year, we will host an event to remember her. Remembering her will also be an incentive to continue the work on the establishment of ethical guidelines for chemical professionals.

With a special event co-organised with the French delegation during the Eightieth Session of the Executive Council, we envisage to commemorate the Strasbourg Agreement of 1675 which is known as the first international agreement banning the use of chemical weapons.

The history of treaties dealing with chemical weapons is not over yet. Jointly we have to reach universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We are happy to receive news on progress in three countries not yet members of the OPCW family. The German Government will continue to engage with all countries outside of the Convention.

As States Parties to the OPCW, we have to live up to our obligations of the Convention. This also includes timely payment of annual contributions and of verification invoices. In its latest report, the Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Issues (ABAF) expressed concern of the fact that a considerable number of States Parties are in arrears and that this situation is having an impact on the cash position of the Organisation. We would like to suggest a briefing by the Director-General for this Council about the OPCW's actual financial situation at a time he considers appropriate.

Germany welcomes the debate on the future of the OPCW beyond 2025. This discussion will have to include the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors as well as central nervous system-acting chemicals.

I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session of the Council and be posted to the OPCW website.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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