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NETHERLANDS

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JAN-LUCAS VAN HOORN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS TO THE OPCW AT THE
SEVENTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

The Netherlands associates itself with the statement pronounced by the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union.

At this first formal session of the Council under your chairmanship, my delegation welcomes you to the Chair and assures you of my delegation's full support in exercising your duties. We are confident that you will guide our deliberations with the wisdom and diplomatic *savoir faire* that characterise you.

My delegation thanks the Director-General for his opening statement and the Vice-Chairpersons for their reports.

Regarding the situation in Syria, we welcome the announcement on 17 June by the Secretariat, that the disposal of the effluents resulting from the neutralisation of chemicals on board the MV Cape Ray in Germany and Finland has been completed. We express our confidence that the destruction of the last remaining declared agent, at Veolia, Texas in the United States, will be completed soon, now that the technical issues encountered seem to have been solved.

We have taken note of the fifth report of the Declaration Assessment Team and look forward to the briefing on the work of the team later during this session. We have great respect and admiration for the unremitting dedication with which the team members perform their duties. We can only hope that their efforts will lead to the long overdue submission by the Syrian authorities of the agreed supplementary document (also referred to as the Historical Overview Document), which is to shed light on the many remaining uncertainties and discrepancies in the Syrian declarations.

The continued use of chemical agents, particularly chlorine, as a weapon in the Syrian Arab Republic is a matter of the gravest concern. We thank the members of the Fact-Finding Mission's teams Alfa and Bravo, for their courage and professionalism, and look forward to the results of their recent inquiries, including the results of the analysis of the evidence collected. In this respect, we look forward to the Director-General's update on the Fact-Finding Mission. My delegation reiterates that any use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in Syria is a violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and of Security Council



resolution 2118, is totally unacceptable and those responsible shall be held to account for their deeds.

On a more positive note, the prospects for further universalisation of the Convention are promising. We hope to be able to welcome South Sudan as a new member to the OPCW family in the course of this session, and Angola in the very near future. In the same vein, the Netherlands looks forward with anticipation to the announced statement by the Foreign Minister of the Union of the Republic of Myanmar, and the “important news” it contains.

The Netherlands has welcomed the various activities undertaken by the Secretariat to improve relationships and cooperation with external stakeholders. As an example, we have actively participated in the education and outreach event, held in the autumn of last year. My delegation is convinced that further initiatives are required to maintain the Organisation as a pivotal player in the field of chemical weapons knowledge and the prevention of re-emergence of chemical weapons, as well as the peaceful uses of chemistry. It is with this in mind, that my delegation expresses its support for the establishment of an Advisory Board on Education and Outreach.

The Netherlands would like to support the request of my American and German colleagues to have a briefing by the Director-General about the OPCW’s actual financial situation at the Executive Council session in October, taking into consideration the substantial arrears by a considerable number of States Parties.

Finally, I should like to express my delegation’s gratitude to a number of people for whom this is the last session of the Council. First and foremost, my delegation thanks the Deputy Director-General, Mrs Grace Asirwatham, for the professional co-operation with the authorities of the Netherlands during her tenure. This Council is also saying goodbye to a number of highly respected and appreciated Permanent Representatives. Of all those leaving I would like to name in particular the Permanent Representatives of the two largest possessor States, Ambassador Roman Kolodkin of the Russian Federation and Ambassador Robert Mikulak of the United States of America. We thank them for the way they served their countries as well as our Organisation and we wish them the very best for the future. Also, I wish to bid a personal farewell to my friend and colleague, Ambassador Willy de Buck of Belgium. The intensity of our ties in the past three years is a true reflection of the intensity of the relationship between our two countries. I thank him for his friendship and his humour and I wish him the very best in his next assignment. I am certain our paths will cross again in the future.

In order not to prolong this statement, I would like to say farewell to all other colleagues who are leaving this summer. My best wishes for the future accompany them all.

In closing, I request that this statement be issued as an official document of this Seventy-Ninth Session of the Executive Council and be published on the OPCW website and extranet.

Thank you.