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BRAZIL

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BRAZIL TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

I am pleased to see you once again presiding over another session of the Executive Council. Rest assured of my delegation's cooperation for a successful outcome of this meeting. We would also like to thank the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat for having well prepared this session.

Our agenda is marked by topics of high importance. My initial remarks regard some aspects of the Syrian programme, as it continues to draw much of our attention. Sadly, the Syrian conflict has entered its sixth year. Reports of incidents involving the hostile use of chemicals continue to be particularly worrisome. But, though fraught with obstacles that arise in a country enmeshed in a civil war, we have made progress in advancing the dismantlement of the Syrian programme, as well as in addressing the use of chemical weapons in the conflict. And it is noteworthy that the Syrian Arab Republic's stockpiles and most of its production facilities have been destroyed.

Admittedly, given the circumstances inherent to a civil strife, the situation remains very challenging. The OPCW should continue to focus its activities on FFM's and DAT's ongoing work. On the latter, we recognise that the DAT has clarified many discrepancies identified in the Syrian initial declaration though some remain yet unresolved. But we expect that these will be satisfactorily clarified before long. For this it will be key that the DAT should continue to develop its work together with the Syrian authorities. We should bear in mind that to raise that work from the technical to the political level would require the concurrence of the Syrian authorities, lest it would be ineffective.

In this respect, we encourage the Syrian Government to do its utmost to cooperate with the DAT in order to dispel all doubts related to its initial declaration. Cooperation amongst all interested States Parties will be critical in this process, to which OPCW can contribute through the mechanisms available under the Convention. An end to the use, actual or allegedly, of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic lies in creating conditions for de-escalating tensions on the ground, tackling extremism and attaining a sustainable political solution to the crisis in the broader context of the ongoing Geneva process.



We should not lose sight of the fact that the destabilising effects of political and security crises pose a real challenge to our endeavour for a world free of chemical weapons. We have learnt with concern the report provided by the Libyan authorities that stocks of Category 2 substances could be under the threat of an imminent attack by terrorist groups, including the self-proclaimed Islamic State. Its complexities aside, the case merits urgent consideration in order to prevent these materials from falling into the wrong hands. We believe that the OPCW should assist the Libyan Government to achieve, at the earliest, a safe and effective destruction of the chemicals in question. In this regard, a thorough legal analysis and a precise security risk assessment by the Technical Secretariat are crucial to enable the Council to take the most appropriate decision in light of the current circumstances prevailing in that country.

The incidents in Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq bring to our attention the importance of strengthening the OPCW's capabilities to tackle the use of chemical weapons, under any circumstance, by anyone, including non-State actors. We welcome the work accomplished by the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism (OEWG-T) and the Sub-working Group on non-State actors (SWG). We reaffirm that States Parties retain the primary responsibility for preventing whomever from perpetrating activities prohibited by the Convention in their territories. The effective and universal implementation of its relevant provisions, in particular Article VII, is an adequate response for tackling this issue. It should also be taken together with other international instruments, such as United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2014). The OPCW can play a complementary role in global efforts to combat terrorism, in addition to the existing international legal framework on counter-terrorism.

The discussions on non-State actors remind us of the challenge of adapting the core objectives of the Convention to contemporary realities. While it is clear that these objectives will remain highly relevant in the near future, we believe that more can be done, especially in cooperation and verification. On the latter, the mechanism could be improved through the strategic selection of the sites to be inspected, and through more consistent work to prevent any possible diversion of production in the future. We support that these issues, as well as the capacity-building for the peaceful use of chemistry, should be taken due account of during the discussion on the establishment of an Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priorities (OEWG-FP).

Finally, a word on international cooperation one of the main pillars of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Brazil welcomes the timely discussion on the effective implementation of Article XI to be held during this Council session. In particular, I am pleased to inform you that Brazil will host, from 18 to 20 April, a regional Seminar on the Chemical Weapons Convention and Chemical Safety & Security, with the aim to supporting chemical safety and security management in the chemical industry in the LAC countries. We encourage other States Parties, in particular the developed ones, to engage in similar activities and further assist partners to enhance their technical capacity to fully implement the Convention.

Thank you.