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FINLAND

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR KATRI VIINIKKA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FINLAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

Finland fully aligns itself with the statement made by the Netherlands on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to thank the Director-General for his statement and the Technical Secretariat for their valuable work. As a new permanent representative of Finland, I would like to express my full commitment to the Organisation's efforts and its important mission. I very much look forward to working constructively with all of you.

In the context of the Syrian Arab Republic, Finland commends the significant work by the Declaration Assessment Team and gives full support to its efforts and also in the future. We want to reiterate that the safety and security of the team's personnel must be given top priority. The DAT's recent report states various issues which seem to remain open and it lists new findings which have come up in the course of the DAT's missions. In its conclusions the report states that the team was unable to verify that the declaration and related submissions of the Syrian Arab Republic are accurate and complete. These are all matters of grave concern. The international community must have full confidence that the Syrian Arab Republic has permanently abandoned its chemical weapons programme. Responsibility for achieving this confidence resides with the Syrian Arab Republic. Finland supports the draft decision proposed by the United States of America regarding the report by the Director-General regarding the declaration and related submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic.

The use of toxic chemicals as weapons constitutes a breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention and customary international law, and the international community must condemn the use in the strongest possible terms and bring to justice those responsible for these inhumane acts. This is why we give our full support to the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism and the Fact-Finding Mission supporting JIM's investigations.

The use of chemical weapons by non-State actors is a source of great concern, and we need to do our best to prevent action of this kind from occurring. Finland supports the important work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and discussion also in other relevant fora. This is a complex, cross-sectoral issue, and we need to think of effective ways on how and where to tackle it.



Turning to other important issues, Finland has followed and supported the discussion on central nervous system-acting chemicals and is one of the co-sponsors of the joint paper initiated by Australia. Finland considers it to be important to continue the discussion on aerosolised CNS-acting chemicals in law enforcement. Finland is not developing, producing, using, or stockpiling any toxic chemicals, other than riot control agents, for law-enforcement purposes. We thus have no national constraints on this matter and would encourage further steps in the framework of the OPCW.

Finland supports the further development and expansion of the OPCW Central Analytical Database, OCAD. The OCAD is by far the widest existing database of chemical warfare agents and an essential tool in on-site inspections, and also the most reliable database for the off-site analysis. The more comprehensive the OCAD is, the more likely it is that the relevant chemicals to the Convention will be identified. We also think that the OCAD should include data of certain relevant non-scheduled chemicals such as data of Central Nervous System (CNS) acting chemicals. The OCAD is one of the key tools in ensuring the continued effectiveness of the verification regime and its development and its expansion with relevant chemicals ought to be of interest to all.

Finland has been actively contributing to various OPCW's missions. We will remain committed and ready to offer our contribution and expertise in topical endeavours also in the future.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

I would like to request the statement to be circulated as an official document of the session and to be published on the OPCW's external server and the public website.

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