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CHILE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MARÍA TERESA INFANTE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CHILE TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,

We welcome you once more as the head of this Council.

We welcome the report of the Director-General on the status of the Organisation and the activities that have been under way, as well as the reports of the Vice-Chairpersons and facilitators.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement by the Non-Aligned Movement and China presented by Ambassador Haifa Aissami, Permanent Representative of the Bolivian Republic of Venezuela.

With the objective of achieving a world free of chemical weapons, we reiterate our satisfaction with the progress made in the destruction of Libya's remaining chemical weapons. We emphasise the commitment of this State Party to achieving this goal, the assistance provided by the Technical Secretariat, and the support of a variety of States Parties.

We also welcome the plan submitted by Iraq for the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiled in bunker 13 of Al Muthana, as well as the arrangement between the OPCW and this country to regulate the inspections carried out at said location. Given the current conditions within that location, we recognise the risk to human life that a direct visit to the site would imply, and the challenges posed by the security situation in that country; we believe that the proposed solution is effective and is in line with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

As we face the recent news regarding the alleged use of chemical agent in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention on the territory of member States of the OPCW, we reiterate our concerns; we condemn the use of chemical agent as weapons by any actor, and we welcome the promptness with which the Technical Secretariat has offered its assistance to the authorities of the countries concerned. We look forward to the findings of the investigations once they are concluded.



With regard to the Syrian Arab Republic, we recognise that security-related conditions have hindered the completion of the destruction of production facilities, which is still under way. At the same time, while we observe the steps made in this area, it is worrying that in the past few months, allegations of the use of chemicals as weapons in that country have persisted. This only strengthens our resolve that the Fact-Finding Mission, the serious and professional work of which we strongly value, must continue working. We will be carefully following its reports and findings.

Having extended the mandate of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) for one year, we are confident that both organisations will continue to serve as an example of collaboration aimed at identifying, to the greatest possible extent, those responsible for the use of chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic—and to that end, the facts as established by the Fact-Finding Mission are essential. We note the fifth report of the JIM, in the sense that this report features a structure guaranteeing independent capabilities and authority to perform their work, among other things, in collaboration with the relevant regional States.

We are pleased that the first investigation of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) has been completed in line with paragraph 11 of the decision adopted by this Executive Council on 11 November 2016. This decision constitutes the basis upon which new and necessary paths of collaboration will develop between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Technical Secretariat. On the other hand, according to what was stated by the Director-General in his report of 2 March this year, we still have many unresolved matters that the Syrian Arab Republic must help clarify with regard to its declaration in order to ensure that it is accurate and complete, in line with the provisions of the Convention and the decision of this Council, dated 27 September 2013. We urge the Syrian Government to continue demonstrating progress in that area.

Our country has supported the full and effective implementation of Article XI of the Convention and, taking as a reference the work that is being carried out by the Technical Secretariat, we believe that there is room to progress with initiatives that respond to the specific needs of developing countries. We will work to ensure that the ideas and proposals that emerge from the workshop that took place last November are organised in a way that contributes to the Organisation's cooperative programmes, and we hope to address this issue at the next Council session.

The allegations of the use of chemical weapons or toxic chemicals as weapons by non-State actors—terrorists in particular—demonstrate the importance of the discussions taking place within the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and its Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors. With the active contribution of the Technical Secretariat, these groups provide a space for exchanging experiences on how the Organisation can continue to contribute to global efforts in confronting chemical terrorism and strengthen its work with other international and regional organisations. In addition to congratulating Ambassador Diop on his appointment as head of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, we also welcome the varied and rich proposals from groups of delegations and countries with which we have officially met in order to bring together different points of view on priorities and main points of focus as we continue to address this issue. We will continue to engage in consultations and receive input at these meetings, which serve as the basis for this year's work plan.

In this regard, we have welcomed the establishment of the Rapid Response and Assistance Mission, which we see as an instrument that can deploy the capabilities of the Technical Secretariat in the form of a timely response to a request for assistance by a State Party affected by an attack with chemical weapons launched by non-State actors—all within the framework of Article X of the Convention. We valued the session dedicated to this topic, where the Technical Secretariat submitted more information and responded to questions from States Parties, as well as subsequent proposals to enrich this initiative; one of these is its eventual implementation in chemical incidents within the framework activities that are not prohibited by the Convention.

These issues provide direction for the work being carried out under the expert direction of the Ambassadors of Canada and South Africa on the future priorities of the Organisation. We reiterate our commitment to these efforts.

I would like to join the tribute to our much appreciated Ambassador Jan-Lucas van Hoorn, with whom we shared our work days in The Hague and whose legacy shall endure in our memory.

Madam Chairperson, as this is to be the last session under your direction, I would like to express to you our appreciation and gratitude for directing our work during a period of uncertainty, when it has been more challenging to reach agreements.

I kindly request, Madam Chairperson, that this statement be considered an official document of this Council and published on the OPCW website.

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