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TURKEY

**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF TURKEY TO THE
OPCW AT THE EIGHTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Thank you Mr Chairperson,

At the outset, I would like to thank Director-General Ambassador Üzümcü for his extensive update today. I wish to express our appreciation to the OPCW staff for their relentless efforts regarding the ongoing operations of the OPCW particularly in relation to Syria.

We also align ourselves with the European Union statement made by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Estonia.

As the Council is well aware, the use of chemical weapons in Syria remains unabated. The latest report of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) of 29 June, regarding the 4 April Khan Shaykhun chemical weapons attack, confirmed that sarin was used as a weapon one more time. Without a delay, the perpetrators of this heinous attack must be held accountable in line with the findings of the recent FFM report which was presented to the UN Security Council and the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). Countless thresholds have been passed regarding the violation of the Convention and relevant international law, by the Syrian regime, since the regime's accession to the Convention and the regime still enjoys impunity despite the attribution of responsibility of using chemical weapons. Needless to mention, Turkey strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons, as well as the toxic chemicals as a weapon in Syria or anywhere, by anyone, be it a state party or a non-State actor. The use of chemical weapons by anyone, whether a State or a non-State actor, does not only constitute a breach of basic norms of international law, but also is a serious crime against humanity whose perpetrators must be held accountable.

With these considerations, we became a co-signatory to the joint declaration which was initiated by France and Germany. We appreciate the work of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT). As a result of the DAT reports, including the last one, the gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the regime's declaration point out to the fact that the mission of total elimination of chemical weapons in Syria is far from over. The DAT's efforts are of critical importance also because of the fact that the terrorist organisations which may have access to the regime's facilities should never have the capability to use or produce chemical weapons neither today nor in the future.

As a State Party, meticulously fulfilling its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, Turkey firmly supports and facilitates the activities of both the DAT and FFM.



Both FFM and JIM efforts are being conducted in an impartial, unbiased and highly professional manner.

Turkey attributes utmost significance to the universalisation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We once again call upon those States who are not yet party to the Convention to do so without further delay. We believe that joining of those remaining countries to the Convention regime would bolster the efforts in other disarmament fields, in particular the nuclear disarmament initiatives.

We believe that besides the security and disarmament priorities of the Organisation, materialising concrete deterrence measures against the re-emergence of chemical weapons and preventing the impunity perpetrators of them will be crucial for the future credibility of the OPCW.

Finally, we thank the Director-General for sharing the Draft Programme and Budget for 2018 last week. We wish productive and constructive deliberations on this matter in the forthcoming weeks.

I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Eighty-Fifth Session of the Executive Council and posted on the external server and the website. Thank you.

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