



OPCW

Executive Council

Eighty-Eighth Session

10 – 12 July 2018

EC-88/NAT.17

10 July 2018

ENGLISH only

PORTUGAL

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ROSA BATORÉU
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PORTUGAL TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,

As Portugal resumes its seat in the Executive Council, I would like to welcome you to the chair and wish you a successful steering of this session. Let me assure you that you can count on Portugal's support throughout your mandate.

I'd like also to renew Portugal's gratitude and appreciation for the leadership and vision of Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü during his tenure as Director-General, which coincided with one of the most challenging periods of this Organisation's work. My most sincere wishes go to Ambassador Üzümcü for his future endeavours.

Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Austria on behalf of the European Union. We want an OPCW that is united and strengthened in the promotion of its core principles and objectives. An Organisation able to fully develop its potential and effectively work towards global chemical security in the face of new risks and challenges. In short, Portugal believes in an OPCW that remains a credible and respected actor in the international security architecture.

With this in mind, Portugal sponsored the decision on "Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use" adopted last month by the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties, and looks forward to its timely and efficient implementation.

The recent incident in which two people were affected by a highly lethal nerve agent in Amesbury, one of whom sadly passed away, reinforces the need to effectively uphold the ban on chemical weapons. Portugal wishes to express its solidarity with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and looks forward to a thorough and swift investigation of this serious incident.

Portugal welcomes the initiatives and decisions taken, and the progress achieved by the OPCW in many areas, including in relation to declared chemical weapons stockpiles and the threats posed by non-State actors. Likewise, we value the efforts undertaken by the Technical Secretariat to streamline their activity, and the prospective work done in relation to new key projects such as the Centre for Chemistry and Technology, as well as the strategic avenues proposed by the Scientific Advisory Board and the Advisory Board for Education and Outreach.



However, it is imperative not to lose sight of the very urgent and critical tasks at hand that remain unfinished, in particular those related to the persisting gaps and deficiencies identified in the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic. We would like to reiterate our support and appreciation for the work done by the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team.

It is also imperative, given the recurrent allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, that the Fact-Finding Mission continues to carry out its important work.

To conclude, we trust that the Fourth Review Conference will reinvigorate and re-launch the OPCW by consolidating the progress made, and the lessons learned, and by establishing a new set of priorities and targets, supported by the appropriate tools, that will allow the Organisation to better fulfil the objectives enshrined in the Convention.

I would kindly request that this declaration be circulated as an official document of the Executive Council and published on the website of the Organisation.

Thank you very much Madam Chairperson.

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