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DENMARK

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JENS-OTTO HORSLUND
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Denmark aligns itself fully with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Austria, Ms Heidemaria Gürer, on behalf of the European Union. I wish to add the following remarks in a national capacity.

We, the States Parties, have a common goal: A world free of chemical weapons. This goal is under threat. Actual use of chemical weapons is on the rise. Denmark is gravely concerned over the continued use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, as documented by the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) most recently in Ltamenah and Saraqib. The conclusions of the FFM concerning Ltamenah are chilling. The results of the sample analysis concerning sarin are consistent with those from Khan Shaykhun, where the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) confirmed that the Syrian regime had used sarin. We await the final results of the FFM's work on the attacks in Douma in April this year.

We are equally concerned over the persistent gaps and discrepancies in the Syrian declarations. We can only echo the demand of the Conference: the Syrian Arab Republic must immediately cease any use of chemical weapons, and declare all relevant information concerning its chemical weapons programme and stockpiles to the OPCW. The Declarations Assessment Team (DAT) has our full support—the Syrian Arab Republic must cooperate fully and without further delay.

Denmark has full confidence in the work of the FFM and the DAT. We commend the professionalism and integrity of the OPCW staff. Against this background, Denmark is extremely pleased with the outcome of the recent Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties. An outcome Denmark wholeheartedly supported as a co-sponsor, and continues to support. Repeated use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic demands that we attribute responsibility for such crimes as a means to end impunity, restore accountability and prevent further use. The work of the JIM must be continued, and the OPCW has a clear mandate as emphasised by the Conference. We are confident that the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat will move swiftly in implementing the measures requested by the Conference to this effect. Denmark stands ready to look into ways



in which we can support the Secretariat if needed, and we look forward to the 30-day report to the Executive Council.

We are saddened and outraged by the tragic news of further casualties and one death in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland resulting from exposure to Novichok. Our thoughts go to the bereaved families, and we offer the United Kingdom our full sympathy and support. This only reinforces the need for all of us to redouble our efforts in preventing use of chemical weapons.

The Council has a lengthy agenda before it. I will not comment on all issues, but simply recall Denmark's priorities for the future of the OPCW: A strong Organisation that is fit for purpose, with the right tools and capabilities to fulfil its mandate—a world free of chemical weapons. As the international security environment changes so must the Organisation. We will address this at the upcoming Fourth Review Conference, which will lay out the way ahead. Suffice to say that retaining existing capacity, knowledge and expertise while taking full account of developments in science and technology is vital, as is strengthening the visibility and relevance of the OPCW for all stakeholders.

I remember your request of the last meeting of the Council to keep things tight and on schedule. Let me nevertheless welcome you to the chair of the Council, and express the full confidence and support of my delegation for your stewardship. I also wish to thank the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal of Bangladesh for his sterling efforts. And last but by no means least I wish to thank the Director-General Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for all his efforts over the past years. You made a difference, you made the OPCW stronger and we will miss you.

I request that this statement be treated as an official document of this session and published on the OPCW website.

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