



OPCW

Executive Council

Thirty-Third Meeting
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ENGLISH and FRENCH only

FRANCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR PIERRE MÉNAT
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE OPCW
FOLLOWING THE ADOPTION OF THE DECISION ON SYRIA
AT THE THIRTY-THIRD MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

For several months, the conviction has been growing in France that the Damascus regime has used chemical weapons against the civilian population. The United Nations mission led by Mr Sellström, to whom I pay tribute, came to the overwhelming conclusion that chemical weapons had been used on a fairly large scale, including against civilians and, notably, against children. France condemns these crimes most rigorously, which must not go unpunished.

This situation, which represents a threat to international peace and security, calls for a strong response.

This is the thrust of the decision that the Executive Council of the OPCW adopted by consensus on Friday 27 September; that decision contains a plan that is both ambitious and realistic for the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons. Extraordinary situations call for extraordinary measures. It assigns a very strict timetable and binding obligations on the Damascus authorities for the declaration, control, and subsequent elimination of their chemical arsenal. To France's satisfaction, this text gives our Organisation a major role to play in the implementation of this plan.

Likewise, resolution 2118, adopted by the United Nations Security Council last Friday, stipulates that, in the event that the Damascus authorities fail to fulfil the obligations assigned to them, appropriate measures will be taken under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

These two texts form a coherent whole, which enables the international community to use robust and credible instruments for the destruction of the Syrian chemical arsenal. This ambitious plan must now be implemented without the slightest delay. France will maintain the utmost vigilance in this respect, and will ensure that any delay or transgression is immediately denounced and rectified. I should like to emphasise, at this point, that France will cooperate fully with the OPCW, in terms of financial, human, and material resources.

I should like to note, Mr Chairman, that a representative from Damascus has been present in this room, and that this is likely to happen again in the future, although Syria is not yet a member of the OPCW. For the French delegation, this presence is an opportunity to notify



these representatives of their binding obligations. This situation in no way affects our position on the absence of the Damascus regime.

Thank you.

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