



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

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**STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL  
TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AT ITS THIRTY-SEVENTH MEETING  
8 JANUARY 2014**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I welcome you to the Thirty-Seventh Meeting of the Executive Council and extend to you my best wishes for a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

At the Thirty-Sixth Meeting of the Council, I was requested, in close consultation with relevant States Parties, to report to the Council not later than 8 January on the implementation of the plan for the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons outside the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. This Note (EC-M-37/DG.2, dated 7 January 2014) was made available to States Parties yesterday and covers the activities undertaken as at 7 January to enable the removal and eventual destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons.

Yesterday, at approximately 17:00 local time, a Danish cargo vessel left the port of Latakia in the Syrian Arab Republic carrying the first consignment of priority chemicals. The process of removal of chemicals from the Syrian Arab Republic for destruction outside its territory has thus begun.

This activity marks an important new phase in the work of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission, which, since the beginning of October of last year, has facilitated and verified crucial milestones in the progress towards the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme by mid-2014.

This move has occurred after some delay. At the same time, States Parties have been kept informed of the circumstances due to which the deadline of 31 December 2013 has not been met. These include the security situation, which deteriorated significantly in the early part of December; the challenges associated with the procurement and delivery of large quantities of packaging and transportation materials and equipment; and the adverse weather conditions, which further impeded the logistical arrangements during a crucial part of last month.

I had already mentioned the possibility of some delay, and the factors having an impact on the timelines, in my statement to the Council at its last meeting (on 17 December), as well as in my latest monthly report.



Despite these challenging circumstances, Syria has now received virtually all of the necessary logistical resources for the ground transportation.

With regard to maritime transportation, on 27 December, a meeting was held in Moscow with the participation of representatives of China, Denmark, the Russian Federation, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the United States of America, as well as representatives of the Technical Secretariat and the Joint Mission. In this meeting, the operational aspects of this complex multinational endeavour were successfully finalised. The Syrian Arab Republic, in a timely decision, also conveyed its acceptance of a set of understandings that facilitate this joint multinational operation for the maritime transport of the chemicals.

This operation entails a major concerted effort by the States involved, and I would like to express my appreciation to all those contributing to this endeavour.

In addition to the preparations for the transportation of the chemicals, important steps have also been taken to enable the destruction of priority chemicals aboard a United States vessel at sea. The Secretariat and the United States of America have prepared a facility agreement for the chemical weapons destruction facility on the vessel, as well as a detailed plan for the verification of destruction. This agreement is before the Council. In preparation for the verification activities to be carried out on board, a team of eight OPCW inspectors recently participated in a training programme in the United States of America.

The tendering process for the treatment and disposal of chemicals, effluents, and packaging materials related to the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons is well under way and I expect it to be completed on schedule. The Secretariat has issued the "Model Agreement" as discussed earlier, specifying the arrangements for on-site inspections at the selected commercial chemical disposal facilities. This model agreement is also before the Council. Arrangements based on the model agreement are envisaged to be in place prior to the award of a contract to a company.

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has informed the Secretariat that it will, through an in-kind contribution, carry out the destruction of key binary chemicals. This is a significant contribution, and I would like to encourage all States Parties to consider providing such voluntary support to enable the successful completion of this important collective task.

I am heartened by the response by States Parties to my appeal for contributions to the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons. The balance of the fund currently stands at EUR 11.8 million. Contributions have been received from the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Turkey, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This includes such contributions that had originally been made to the first OPCW Trust Fund for Syria and which have, at the request of the donor, been subsequently transferred, in parts or in their entirety, to the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons. A further contribution to this fund of approximately EUR 350,000 is expected from the Republic of Korea. In addition, the European Union has decided to contribute EUR 12 million, and the Government of Japan has decided, subject to parliamentary approval, to contribute an amount of EUR 4.9 million. Italy recently indicated that it would make an additional contribution of EUR 2 million and Switzerland has pledged

a contribution of approximately EUR 400,000. I would like once again to express my sincere appreciation to all these States Parties for their valuable contributions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Throughout the operation, verification will remain an important task of the Secretariat. Preparations have been made for effective verification during the packaging, transportation, and removal of Syrian chemicals that are designed to ensure against the risk of tampering with or diversion of any of the chemical materials.

The recent initiation of the transportation phase is a positive development. This effort must be sustained. As I have indicated in my recent report to the Council, it is important to stress that delays in completing the transportation and removal of the chemicals would not only have an impact on the ability to meet the timelines set by the Council, but also on the subsequent process of procurement and disposal of the chemicals. The latter involves commercial companies of which the ability to receive and treat chemicals might be affected by delays, leading to financial and legal consequences.

The fundamental prerequisites to ensure the safe packaging, transport, and removal of chemical weapons material are by and large in place. The decision by the Syrian Arab Republic not to decant and repack materials, unless operational needs are imperative, is a constructive development. It is my hope that the plan to complete the transportation of priority chemicals, and the subsequent removal of the remaining chemicals, will pick up further pace. For this, I have stressed the importance of initiatives to consider augmenting convoy security as an alternative to security-related equipment that is unavailable.

In my recent conversation with high-level Syrian officials, we agreed that there is a need to maintain the momentum.

I thank you for your attention.

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