



OPCW

Executive Council

Forty-First Meeting
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GERMANY

STATEMENT BY THE HEAD OF THE GERMAN NATIONAL AUTHORITY AT THE FORTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Mr Chairman,

At the outset, let me welcome you as the new Chairman of the Council. This delegation pledges its full support to you in your stewardship of the Council at this important moment in the history of this Organisation.

We welcome the update by the Director-General. Let me add that we truly value the enormously good work that the Technical Secretariat has been carrying out, both in The Hague and in the field, on this important task of verifying the dismantlement of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. We highly appreciate your dedication, your professionalism and your courage.

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

This Council is taking place at a critical juncture: The 30 June deadline set up by the United Nations Security Council and by this Council for the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme is drawing close. It is just 6 weeks away. Still, not all Syrian chemicals have left the country. They should have left months ago.

From the beginning, the OPCW and the international community has undertaken extraordinary efforts to support the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme financially, politically, logistically and in every possible manner. The ships have been in the Mediterranean Sea for many months, the tender process for the incineration of chemicals in commercial facilities has long been completed. Many countries have paid into the OPCW Trust Fund for the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons.

But, there are still chemicals waiting to be removed from the Syrian Arab Republic.

This is why we remain deeply concerned about the halt of the removal process of the Syrian chemical weapons since 24 April.

Germany does take notice of the security situation on the ground. The security situation, however, must not be used as an excuse for further delays, but as an incentive to accelerate the removal of the remaining chemicals. We expect the Syrian Arab Republic to brief this Council on its plans to expedite the removal process and to make up for the substantial slippage that has occurred.



The responsibility for the timely removal of all chemicals and their destruction in conformity with the decisions taken by this Council, and resolution 2118 of the United Nations Security Council, entirely rests with the Syrian Arab Republic.

Another area, in which there also has been substantial slippage, is the destruction of the 12 remaining Syrian chemical weapons production facilities.

These should have been destroyed by 15 March 2014. We call upon the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate fully and to finalise a destruction plan - at least starting with the seven hangars. We welcome the report by the Director-General, we have just heard, on recent technical consultations in Beirut. We understand that the most expedient and technically sound manner of destroying the hangars, as laid out in the Technical Secretariat-Syrian paper, is collapsing their roofs through explosives. We stand ready to adopt a decision to that effect any time.

The destruction of all chemical weapons production facilities constitutes an integral part of the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

Removal of the Syrian chemical weapons and the destruction of the production facilities, however, will not be the end of the process. Questions remain on the completeness and the accuracy of the Syrian declarations. We welcome the consultation process that the Director-General has started on these issues.

We are certain that the Secretariat will review in detail any information provided by Syria and assess the disclosure, the initial declaration, amendments submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic in order to verify that these submissions are fully accurate and complete.

Germany welcomes the update by the Director-General about the Fact-Finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic that was launched on the possible use of chlorine as a weapon. We are pleased to learn that the Mission is ready to start its work in order to establish the facts about these recent allegations. If proven to be correct such use would constitute a grave violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We support this important Mission established by the Director-General and we are looking forward to his preliminary report.

In closing, I would like to request this statement to be an official document of this meeting of the Council.

I thank you, Chairman.

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