



OPCW

Executive Council

Forty-Eighth Meeting
21, 23, and 29 January 2015

EC-M-48/NAT.11
21 January 2015
ENGLISH only

NETHERLANDS

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JAN-LUCAS VAN HOORN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS TO THE OPCW
AT THE FORTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

My delegation thanks the Director-General for his note and his statement, and the Technical Secretariat for its briefing on the work of the Fact-Finding Mission and the progress made in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

The Netherlands fully aligns itself with the statement pronounced by the Representative of Latvia on behalf of the European Union. Further to that statement, I take this opportunity to make a few observations in a national capacity.

The briefing we have received today and underlying reports show progress. However, the entire process continues to be marked by accumulating delays. It displays the efforts of all parties involved, but the unavoidable conclusion must remain that progress is slow and the job is not yet done.

We understand that the destruction of the first chemical weapon production facility (CWPF) has started. Together with the other eleven, as well as the ricin-facilities declared more recently, it remains to be fully destroyed. The fact that the destruction process dominates the agenda of this Council must be interpreted as an appeal to the Executive Council to remain vigilant. We therefore expect that this Council will continue to meet at regular intervals.

The second report of the work of the Declaration Assessment Team has been eagerly awaited by all of us. What is striking, when reading the report, is that the list of concerns that require further clarification (Table 2) is longer than the list of issues that have been dealt with. In other words, we are still left with pages of issues in urgent need of clarification. It is the responsibility of the Syrian Arab Republic to provide clarity on the remaining doubts about the correctness and completeness of its declaration and we remind them of the need to do so soon. We express our appreciation to the Declaration Assessment Team for its devoted assistance with this important task.

The conclusions of the second report of the Fact-Finding Mission into the use of toxic chemicals in the Syrian Arab Republic state that a toxic chemical was used systematically and repeatedly as a weapon. My delegation is very impressed with the continuous professionalism and impartiality with which the FFM is performing its tasks.



Considering the fact that the third FFM-report confirms the conclusions of the second FFM-report, my delegation wishes to reiterate its position that the use of any toxic chemical as a weapon is prohibited and a clear breach of the Convention and of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). This serious violation of one of the key norms of the Convention, and thus of the OPCW, should be firmly and unequivocally condemned by all its members. We are ascribed the role of 'Chemical Weapons Watchdog', so let us not forget to guard this essential value.

My delegation therefore expresses the wish that this Council will reach agreement on a strongly worded decision condemning the violation of the norms that we all, as Parties to the Convention, should uphold.

In closing, I request that this statement be issued as an official document of this Forty-Eighth Meeting of the Executive Council and be published on the OPCW website and extranet.

Thank you.

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