



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

Fifty-First Meeting  
24 February 2016

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ENGLISH and FRENCH only

**FRANCE**

**STATEMENT BY MR SÉBASTIEN BRAHA  
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE OPCW  
AT THE FIFTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

France associates itself with the statement made by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands on behalf of the European Union.

Our Executive Council is holding a special meeting today to discuss the situation in Libya. Several chemicals, considered as Category 2 weapons under the Convention, are still being stored at the Ruwagha site. The latest destruction plan presented by the Libyan National Authority proposed a destruction completion date of 31 December 2016. However, considering the deteriorating security conditions, this work, for which Libya is responsible under the Chemical Weapons Convention, will likely not be completed by Libya by that deadline.

Presently, the worsening security situation in Libya presents us with a great challenge, which requires quick and appropriate action on the part of the Council. There is a definite urgency: Da'esh is now within 100 kilometres of Ruwagha and the OPCW must play its full role by deciding on the best way to deal with the chemicals that are stockpiled there.

This is why we support the Director-General's decision to convene this special meeting. It is incumbent upon us, based on the information brought to our attention today, to examine the draft decision before us and to assume our responsibilities.

Today Libya is requesting the assistance of the Council and able States Parties to help it ensure that the chemicals stockpiled on its territory do not fall into the hands of terrorists. We must meet this request.

But how? First, by giving the Director-General a mandate to task the Technical Secretariat with continuing the consultations with the Libyan authorities and the States Parties concerned, in order to determine the most appropriate destruction solution. This solution must meet several challenges, including:

- the challenge of technical feasibility, as numerous methods have been envisaged; and
- the challenge in terms of the timetable—time is not on our side, and so the solution must be able to be implemented quickly; then



- the financial challenge, since controlling costs is critical for our Organisation; and
- finally, we will need to meet the greatest of all these challenges, failing which no decision at all can be taken: the security challenge. We will effectively need to choose the option that involves the fewest risks.

In any event, the Technical Secretariat will need to rely on an accurate assessment of the security situation, and we are counting on all partners involved, starting with the Libyan National Authority but also the United Nations and States Parties that might have any information, to develop a destruction plan that is both realistic and achievable. Under these particular circumstances, rest assured once again, Mr Chairperson, that France will play its full part and participate in finding an appropriate solution, as quickly as possible and with the support of all members of the Executive Council.

The experts of the Technical Secretariat have been mobilised in coordination with Libya and the States Parties concerned, and we thank them for everything they have invested. This will be the key to our success in this operation.

I thank you and would ask that this statement be considered as an official document of this meeting.

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