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GERMANY

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTINE WEIL
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY TO THE OPCW
AT THE FIFTY-SIXTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson, Mr Director-General, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of Estonia on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat for their efforts in truly difficult times. Their outstanding work – as we have seen often performed in these days – is crucial to the success of this Organisation.

The primary purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the OPCW, is to bring about the end of chemical weapons and the threat they pose to humanity. It is a common goal to which all members here subscribe.

The more terrifying it is then, to keep receiving reports about the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

In its seventh report, the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) has concluded that the Syrian Arab Armed Forces are responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Khan Shaykhun on the 4 April 2017. The Joint Investigative Mechanism's seventh report has substantiated this fact beyond any reasonable doubt. We express great appreciation for the professionalism and thoroughness in which the report was drafted. The findings are clear. This heinous act constitutes a grave violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. It caused tremendous human suffering and is to be condemned in the strongest possible terms.

We are also appalled at the finding of the seventh report of the JIM about the use of sulfur mustard in Um-Housh by the so-called ISIS/Daesh. We condemn this atrocious act in the strongest possible terms.

In our view, the valuable work of the JIM must be continued, since there are many more incidents to be investigated. Only a few days ago, the OPCW's Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) established that sarin was traced in the 30 March 2017 incident in Ltamenah, the Syrian Arab Republic. In addition to that the FMM has confirmed many times that chemical weapons have been used in the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. Once again, we call upon the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate fully with the OPCW in order to resolve the gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in its declarations. Yesterday, this was also clearly stated



by the German Foreign Minister, together with his colleagues from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France and the United States of America.

Violating the Chemical Weapons Convention's fundamental rule, not to use chemical weapons, simply cannot go unanswered. The use of chemical weapons is totally unacceptable and a disgrace to all of us, the States Parties of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Holding the perpetrators accountable is what we have to do to show the world that we are firmly determined to defend the treaty and the values of the Chemical Weapons Convention for the sake of humanity.

We have all acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention to achieve the main goal: to rid the world of chemical weapons and to make sure that these barbaric weapons do not re-emerge. It is now up to us to live up to that goal and to condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, and to express our deep conviction that those responsible must be held accountable.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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