

**Statement by Mr. Petter Lycke
Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden to the OPCW
at the 57th Meeting of the Executive Council**

4 April 2018

Mr. Chairperson, Mr. Director-General, distinguished colleagues,

Sweden fully aligns itself with the statements delivered by Ambassador Kostov of Bulgaria on behalf of the European Union. However, I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Today, April 4th, marks the one year anniversary of the horrendous sarin attack in Khan Sheikhoun, which has been attributed by the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism to the Syrian regime. This was a repugnant and unacceptable illegal attack, which caused a large number of civilian casualties.

Any use of chemical weapons constitutes a serious violation of international law and a threat to international peace and security. The use of chemical weapons in armed conflict is prohibited and is a war crime. Perpetrators must be held accountable. We cannot accept impunity.

With regard to the attempted murder committed in Salisbury by use of a nerve agent developed as a chemical weapon, Sweden's position has been expressed in statements by the Swedish Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, as well as by the European Council on 22 March.

In Sweden's view, the OPCW has an important role to play on all issues concerning the prohibition of chemical weapons. However, at this stage we would consider it appropriate to await the results of the OPCW's sample analysis before reverting to this issue. In terms of the Convention, Sweden agrees that the UK has several options how to respond, and certainly retains the right to conduct its own independent police investigation, according to national legislation. This is one of the reasons why the draft decision as presented is not acceptable to Sweden.

Sweden thanks the UK for informing the Council of the events so far, on the occasion of the last regular Council meeting. We also welcome the Director-General's offer of assistance and the UK's decision to let the OPCW take samples for the purposes of analysis. We would appreciate the UK continuing to keep the Council informed of the progress of its investigation into the matter.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.