



Embassy of Finland  
The Hague

**Statement on behalf of the Republic of Finland  
Delivered by Ambassador Katri Viinikka, Permanent Representative of the Republic of  
Finland to the OPCW**

**At The Eighty-Eighth Meeting of the Executive Council of the OPCW  
10 July 2018**

Madam Chairperson, Mr. Director General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finland aligns itself with the statement made by Austria on behalf of the European Union.

The following remarks will be in my national capacity.

Madam Chairperson,

I would like to start by expressing my country's deepest gratitude and appreciation to Director-General Ahmet Üzümcü and the remarkable work he has done. We thank the Director-General for his commitment to the OPCW and for the excellent cooperation we, like other States Parties to the CWC, have enjoyed with him over the past eight years. Mr. Director-General, Finland wishes you all the best in the future.

I would also like to take this opportunity to once more welcome my dear colleague, Ambassador Jana Reinisova of the Czech Republic, as the new Chair of the Executive Council. I am convinced that under your able leadership we will have a successful meeting and you can count on our full support.

Madam Chairperson,

The use of chemical weapons is explicitly prohibited by the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). We need to remain clear that the use of chemical weapons, including the use of any toxic chemicals as weapons, by anyone, anytime, anywhere and under any circumstances is clearly contrary to international law and may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity.

To our deepest regret and horror, reports of chemical weapons use have continued over the past years and months. This simply cannot be accepted. The norm against chemical weapons use must be reinforced and those responsible for these horrific crimes must be held to account. As States Parties to the CWC, we all have a responsibility to react when chemical weapons are used.

Finland welcomes the decision "Addressing the threat from chemical weapons use" (C-SS-4/DEC.3), adopted by the Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties on June 27<sup>th</sup> 2018. We believe this decision is an important milestone, tasking the OPCW with identifying the perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks. Without attribution, there can be no accountability. We urge all States Parties to the CWC to support the OPCW Technical

Secretariat and to work together in implementing this decision. Finland certainly stands ready to do so.

Madam Chairperson,

Finland expresses its concern over the recent incident involving a nerve agent in Wiltshire, UK, where one of the victims passed away and the other remains hospitalized. Our full solidarity goes out to the UK as they are investigating the matter.

Madam Chairperson,

We note with great concern the OPCW Fact Finding Mission findings of chemical weapons use in Syria. We find the reports of continuous use of chemical weapons in Syria extremely worrisome. Finland fully supports the professional and impartial work of the FFM to study all available information relating to all the alleged instances of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The international community must ensure that the facts are established and those responsible held to account.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.