



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Fourth Special Session
26 and 27 June 2018

C-SS-4/NAT.15
27 June 2018
ENGLISH only

AUSTRIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HEIDEMARIA GURER
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRIA TO THE OPCW
AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES
PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Excellencies,

Austria aligns herself fully with the European Union's statement.

Furthermore, speaking in a national capacity, I would like to make the following additional remarks:

Austria is deeply appalled about the repeated use of chemical weapons. The use of chemical weapons, including the use of any toxic chemicals as weapons, by anyone, under any circumstances, is absolutely prohibited under the Chemicals Weapons Convention and constitutes a violation of international law. This requires a firm reaction by all States Parties.

We have constantly said that the use of such weapons, irrespective of by whom or where, is totally unacceptable and that all those who commit war crimes and crimes against humanity, such as the use of chemical weapons, must be held accountable.

Therefore, Austria has supported, as have all Member States of the European Union, the convening of this special session of the Conference.

It is of absolute necessity to uphold the international norms, our common norms, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention, which is the cornerstone in the fight against chemical weapons and their re-emergence. In this respect, Austria also reiterates her unwavering support for the OPCW, the Director-General and his staff, and expresses her great appreciation for the professionalism, objectivity and impartiality of the Technical Secretariat.

Austria regrets that since September 2017 the United Nations Security Council has not been able to agree on prolonging the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism. A functioning, multilateral, independent and impartial expert mechanism to identify those who have used chemical weapons is vital for upholding the norm of the Convention and effective multilateralism. Austria therefore supports the proposal to task the Director-General of the OPCW with formulating a proposal for such an attribution mechanism. This proposal should be considered by the States Parties of the Convention at the Review Conference in November 2018.



C-SS-4/NAT.15

page 2

I would kindly ask that this statement be issued as an official document and placed on the OPCW public website.

- - - 0 - - -