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ROMANIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR GEORGE CIAMBA
STATE SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ROMANIA
AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Romania fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union delivered by the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria. At the same time, I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

The use of chemical weapons by anyone, be it a State or non-State actor, anywhere and under any circumstances is contrary to international law. This is what all States Parties to the Convention believe and profess, not only as a mantra, but as the supreme principle guiding our work as States, as well as the work of this Organisation. However, 21 years since the entry into force of the Convention, chemical weapons are still being produced and used, in blatant contravention of international norms and standards.

We can no longer close our eyes to this distressing reality, the global regime prohibiting chemical weapons is under unprecedented threat. In a striking violation of international law, chemical weapons have been used in Iraq, Malaysia, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

It seems as though there may be no safe place any more from the possible use of chemical weapons, not only in conflict zones but, appallingly, anywhere. A nerve agent identified as a Novichok has, for instance, been used in March this year in Salisbury, only a few hundred kilometres from the OPCW's headquarters in The Hague.

Against the backdrop of such serious challenges to the Convention, my delegation strongly believes that this special session of the Conference should be used, by all of us, to send a robust signal of our common commitment to uphold the global ban on chemical weapons. Likewise, we believe that this special session is an opportunity to come together and consider the best ways to act collectively in the face of serious challenges. At such a critical time, Romania is of the view that we have a duty to support the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat, and to strive to do more to reinforce the Convention within its current framework.



It is crucial that whenever chemical weapons use occurs on the territory of a State Party, the perpetrators, organisers, sponsors or otherwise involved are identified. My delegation wishes to highlight the benefits of the Technical Secretariat conducting an independent investigation in the case of an alleged chemical weapons attack, with a view to facilitating universal attribution of such attacks, wherever they may occur.

This delegation expresses its appreciation for the extensive work carried out by the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat to determine whether chemical weapons, or toxic chemicals used as weapons, have been used. States Parties have, on numerous occasions, gathered to vigorously condemn such unacceptable violations of the norm against use of chemical weapons. Nevertheless, we believe that, while remaining within the framework of the Convention, States Parties need to consider going one step further. To establish that a chemical was used as weapon, and then to condemn such use, is no longer sufficient. Identification of those responsible should be our common aim, and not a divisive issue. Daring to go one step further in upholding the Convention would make us stronger, not weaker, in the face of the continuous temptation of some to resort to chemical weapons. Instead of being perceived as a blame and shame game, or as directed against someone in particular, this should be a process that is desired by us all.

Against this background, in which we are unfortunately witnessing an increase rather than a curbing of malicious chemical incidents and even straight-out attacks with chemical weapons, my delegation strongly supports the adoption of the draft decision C-SS-4/DEC/CRP.1/Rev.1.

Romania strongly believes in the power of effective multilateralism and international cooperation. The OPCW offers a valuable platform to strengthen such cooperation. Romania commends the establishment of the Rapid Response and Assistance Mission (RRAM) to enhance the Technical Secretariat's capacity and readiness to respond to a request from a State Party for emergency measures of assistance in the face of the use of chemical weapons. A RRAM training exercise took place in Romania in December 2017. My country is determined to continue closely cooperating with the Technical Secretariat, with a view to contributing to the implementation and strengthening of the Convention.

Before concluding Romania's statement, I will express this delegation's hope that the current session of the Conference will succeed in collectively shaping tangible solutions to upholding the global ban against chemical weapons use.

Mr Chairperson, I would like to request that this statement be issued as an official document of the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties and posted on the OPCW external server and public website.