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NEW ZEALAND

**STATEMENT BY MS ERIN MORRISS
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Just two weeks ago, States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention gathered in The Hague to reaffirm our collective support for the global ban against the use of chemical weapons. The recent spate of chemical weapons attacks worldwide serves as a stark reminder of the importance of the OPCW's mission and its crucial contribution to global disarmament efforts. The OPCW Fact-Finding Mission's (FFM) reports into chemical weapons use in the Syrian Arab Republic, this year alone, are shocking in number and horrifying in substance: sarin and chlorine use in Ltamenah and chlorine use in Saraqib. We also note the FFM's interim report on its investigation into Douma, issued last week, detecting the presence of chlorinated organic compounds in the samples analysed so far.

New Zealand condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances. The use of these weapons is highly repugnant and an affront to the global rules and norms that we have collectively committed to uphold. New Zealand also notes our significant concern at the recent death in Amesbury, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, following exposure to a Novichok nerve agent—the same type of nerve agent used in the area last month. We reaffirm our support for the United Kingdom in its ongoing investigation and offer our sympathies to the victims and their families. These instances of chemical weapons use underline the importance of the OPCW and its mandate—indeed, never before has the work of this Organisation been more urgent, nor more vital.

The Conference's decision, adopted last month, ensures that the OPCW has a strong mandate to take forward its important work. New Zealand welcomes the adoption of this decision, and we look forward to working with all States Parties to further strengthen the OPCW and uphold the global ban against chemical weapons.

New Zealand is a strong supporter of the OPCW and supports the Organisation across the full spectrum of its work. To this end, New Zealand was proud to support the OPCW's inaugural Conference on Countering Chemical Terrorism, held from 7-8 June, in The Hague. We are also pleased to announce a financial contribution of NZD 30,000 to the trust fund for the implementation of Article X.



Before we conclude, we would like to offer our sincere thanks to the Director-General, Ahmet Üzümcü, for his remarkable commitment and dedication to the OPCW. Director-General, you can be proud of what you and the OPCW have achieved throughout your term and we wish you all the best for the future. We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Ambassador Fernando Arias. You have New Zealand's full support and we wish you every success.

Thank you.

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