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**TUNISIA**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ELYES GHARIANI  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TUNISIA TO THE OPCW  
AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION  
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you now that you have assumed the chair of this special session. This is also an opportunity for me to pay a warm tribute to the OPCW Technical Secretariat and its Director-General, Ahmet Üzümcü, for his determined actions as head of the Organisation to advance chemical disarmament and non-proliferation.

My country wishes to take this opportunity to reaffirm its steadfast commitment to the letter and spirit of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”), which it ratified in 1997.

Mr Chairperson,

My country’s position is one of principle. Tunisia strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. Faithful to its principles of respect for international law, my country considers that the use of chemical weapons constitutes a violation of the Convention, the decisions of the United Nations Security Council, and the rules of international humanitarian law. In particular, we consider that the potential and confirmed use of chemical weapons by non-State actors constitutes a grave threat to international peace and security, and is a real cause for concern. The international community will need to pool its efforts in order to respond to this in a determined and unified manner.

In this context, Tunisia wishes to underscore the importance of stepping up efforts to ensure that the provisions of the Convention are fully and comprehensively implemented by the Member States of the Organisation, in view of strengthening the attributes of global peace and security.

Tunisia would also underscore the importance of arriving at a universal instrument to allow the OPCW to tackle, under the best conditions, the challenges of its new orientation towards preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons. In this context, we are pleased with the recent accession of Palestine to the Convention, and take this opportunity to call on those who remain outside the community of the Organisation’s Member States to join it without delay.



Mr Chairperson,

Tunisia considers that the policy-making organs of the OPCW, as collegial structures, have much to gain by acting in a spirit of consensus to help the Organisation effectively carry out its activities of investigation into cases of alleged use of chemical weapons, and to enhance the effectiveness and credibility of its work.

Finally, we recall that, given the primacy of the United Nations Security Council in the area of maintaining international peace and security, the imposition of sanctions on those responsible for using chemical weapons remains within the purview of the United Nations Security Council alone, which is in a position to safeguard the balance established in the distribution of mandates among the various intergovernmental bodies.

Mr Chairperson,

The position that we have just adopted with regard to the British text reflects Tunisia's desire to ensure compliance with the Convention by all States Parties. It should in no way be interpreted as being directed against one or several other States Parties. That being said, it is critically important that consensus be restored among the policy-making organs of the OPCW.

Thank you for your attention.

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