

Statement by Finland
Ambassador designate to the OPCW Päivi Kaukoranta
Eighty-Ninth Meeting of the Executive Council of the OPCW
The Hague, 9 October 2018

Madam Chairperson, Director-General, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start by congratulating Ambassador Fernando Arias on his appointment as Director-General of the OPCW, and wishing him the best of success in this important office. As a newcomer to the OPCW, I am personally looking forward to close cooperation with you, Director-General, and with the entire team of the OPCW Technical Secretariat, in taking forward the aims of the organisation. You can count, Director-General, on my delegation's full support in your activities.

In addition to the statement by the European Union, allow me to highlight a few issues from a national perspective.

Madam Chairperson,

The decision "Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use" taken at the Special Conference of States Parties in June, marked an important milestone. Reinforcing the capacity of the Technical Secretariat to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons is a first, important step in combatting impunity for these crimes – crimes we have witnessed time and again over the past months and years, in Syria and Salisbury, in Iraq and in Kuala Lumpur.

Our task today is simple: To see to it that the Technical Secretariat has the support and resources needed to take forward the implementation of this decision.

We thank the Director-General for his report today on the implementation of the decision regarding identification of perpetrators of chemical weapons use in Syria, and look forward to his proposals on arrangements to support universal attribution, to be presented at the Conference of States Parties in November.

As we stated in June, we have full confidence in the ability of the Technical Secretariat to deliver even on a very complex and demanding mandate such as this one – given the necessary cooperation from States Parties, and the resources needed for the task. It is our duty today to ensure that these are indeed available.

Madam Chairperson,

Finland supports the Draft Programme and Budget presented by the Director-General, and looks forward to its timely adoption. In particular, we agree with the Director-General that the costs of the new Office for Attribution should be included in the general budget of the organisation. This is only natural since attribution is a task mandated by the Convention.

We also support the proposed funds on cybersecurity and for IT infrastructure to support the implementation of the June decision. Ensuring the security of the information systems of the OPCW is essential to ensure the safe and unhindered conduct of its operations, and the confidentiality of the data submitted to it by the States Parties. The hostile cyber operation targeting OPCW offices in April once again underlined the importance of robust cybersecurity measures to protect the integrity of the work of the organisation. We deeply deplore such actions which undermine international law and international institutions.

Madam Chairperson,

Besides attribution, the June decision also included important elements on strengthening the implementation of the Convention in other areas, in particular verification, cooperation and assistance. We look forward to the Director-General's proposals on these important topics at the Conference of States Parties in November, and to working together with him, the Technical Secretariat and all delegations in putting them into practice.

Strengthening implementation of the convention, after all, is an aim we all share as States Parties.

Thank you.

