



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

Eighty-Ninth Session  
9 – 11, 18 and 22 October 2018

EC-89/NAT.29  
9 October 2018  
ENGLISH only

**GERMANY**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTINE WEIL  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY  
TO THE OPCW AT THE EIGHTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,  
Director-General,  
Distinguished colleagues,

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union, presented by the head of the Austrian delegation, Ambassador Heidemaria Gürer.

At this first Executive Council during the term of office of our new Director-General, Fernando Arias, I would like to once again express Germany's full support for him. We need his able leadership to fulfil our important tasks and address the challenges ahead.

What are these challenges? Let me mention just the two most important ones.

First and foremost, the rules-based international order with its absolute prohibition of the use of chemical weapons has increasingly come under strain in recent times – with the continued use in Syria and in Iraq, as well as the incidents in Malaysia and the United Kingdom. We need to strengthen OPCW so that it can effectively and successfully fulfil its mission to implement the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

For that purpose, the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of States Parties on 27 June 2018 adopted a decision on addressing the threat from chemical weapons use. The early and comprehensive implementation of this decision will help uphold the binding principle that chemical weapons should not be used by anyone, under any circumstances.

This principle has always been the common basis for our work. Therefore, let us now work together to implement the decision of 27 June 2018.

We thank the Director-General for his report of 27 July 2018 on the initial steps for the implementation of the decision and his report of 4 October 2018 on its progress.

Now, we need to underpin this decision with a corresponding budget proposal, enabling the Technical Secretariat to fulfil the tasks agreed by the States Parties. The Director-General, tasked to make arrangements to identify those using chemical weapons in Syria, has circulated what we deem appropriate and reasonable plans on how to implement this task. Just like any other task, solid funding is required in order to guarantee successful



implementation. In our view, a moderate increase in the regular budget combined with voluntary trust funding would be a good basis. Germany stands ready to share the financial burden and to make a voluntary contribution for this purpose.

Furthermore, as long as assistance is not requested by a State Party, the implementation of OP 20 of the June Conference of the States Parties decision should not have any immediate budget implications.

We look forward to the proposals the Director-General will submit to the Conference of States Parties on establishing independent, impartial, expert arrangements to provide technical expertise to identify the perpetrators of chemical weapons use, if requested by a State Party.

This Council is requested to note the latest report of the Advisory Board on Administrative and Financial Matters. In this context, Germany is deeply concerned that, as it has become clear, not all States Parties select members who satisfy the professional and moral standards required for such a position. We share the request to the Executive Council Chairperson to invite the Russian Federation to propose an alternative, more suitable candidate.

We also look forward to the Director-General's proposals on enhancing the Secretariat's capacity to strengthen the implementation of the Convention verification regime and on the assistance the Secretariat may provide to States Parties.

Madam Chairperson, distinguished colleagues,

Germany remains deeply concerned about the situation in Syria. We express our ongoing strong support for the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission on the use of chemical weapons in Syria, as well as for the Declaration Assessment Team. Most importantly, the suffering of the Syrian population must come to an end. The early and comprehensive implementation of the June Conference of the States Parties decision would be an important step towards ensuring that those who use chemical weapons never enjoy impunity. This would send a clear signal to States Parties that they must maintain the long-standing chemical weapons taboo, and that they should make every effort to bring perpetrators to justice. Anyone using chemical weapons should know that they will not get away with their contemptuous attacks. They should not dare to use chemical weapons on Syrian soil again.

Likewise, there cannot be impunity for those responsible for the malicious use of a military-grade nerve agent in Salisbury on 4 March 2018, which ultimately resulted in the tragic death of a British citizen. We acknowledge the successful deployment of Technical Assistance Visits to the United Kingdom by the Director-General, as requested by the British Government.

The report of the Technical Assistance Visit of 4 September stated clearly that the nerve agent found in Amesbury was the same that was used in the chemical attack in Salisbury. We commend the dedicated work of the experts from the Technical Secretariat and the laboratory in Rijswijk as well as the designated laboratories involved.

By impressive investigative police work, the British authorities have identified two Russian individuals suspected of being the perpetrators of the Salisbury attack. Russia is called upon to contribute constructively to clarifying the remaining open questions. It is high time.

We reiterate our unqualified solidarity with the United Kingdom in this matter.

Madam Chairperson, distinguished colleagues,

Let me turn to the second big challenge – a successful outcome of the upcoming Fourth Review Conference. In spite of divergent views on some of the subjects I have mentioned, we will need to find common language in the final document. We need to put the OPCW in the best possible position to deal with its future tasks. Therefore, we must make every effort to agree on a forward-looking document which clearly addresses the challenges of the coming years and provides the Organisation with the impetus and political support which will allow it to live up to these challenges.

There is much reason to be proud of OPCW. It is the world's most successful disarmament and arms control organisation. We need to secure its success in the future. We will face many new challenges such as the growing threat of the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors. Therefore, we must put OPCW in a position to address the challenges ahead. Let us agree on a forward-looking final document at the Fourth Review Conference!

In closing, let me address the malign cyber operation targeting the OPCW that was disrupted by the Netherlands Defence Intelligence and Security Service. Germany is deeply concerned about what must be described as a reckless attempt at undermining an international organisation's – at undermining OPCW's – integrity. We strongly condemn such behavior and call upon Russia to meet its international responsibilities and cease from such acts.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson

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