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DENMARK

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JENS-OTTO HORSLUND
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK
TO THE OPCW AT THE EIGHTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

Denmark aligns itself fully with the statement delivered by Ambassador Heidemaria Gürer of Austria on behalf of the European Union. I wish only to highlight a few issues in a national capacity.

Ambassador Arias, we welcome you in your new position as Director-General.

This session of the Council takes place at a critical juncture in the history of the Organisation. The upcoming Fourth Review Conference will provide an excellent opportunity to take stock of developments over the last five years and chart a course for the future. We are, however, navigating troubled waters.

Madam Chairperson,

Recent events in Salisbury and subsequently Amesbury are a cause not only for concern, but for outrage. Such reckless attacks must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. The OPCW has on both occasions provided valuable technical assistance to the United Kingdom investigation and confirmed the findings concerning the identity of the nerve agent used. Allow me to repeat the assessment of the United Kingdom authorities that it is highly likely that the Russian Federation is responsible for the attack. No other plausible explanation exists. We continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the United Kingdom in the face of this threat, and we call on Russia to immediately and without further delay provide full disclosure of its Novichok programme to the OPCW.

Madam Chairperson,

The documented use of ongoing chemical weapons in Syria is a cause for the gravest concern. The continued lack of full and adequate declarations by the Syrian regime only aggravates the situation. Both have been well documented by the Fact-Finding Mission and the Declarations Assessment Team. It is not difficult to draw inferences from the combination of failure to disclose and continued use. We owe it to the victims and to our Convention to



prevent further use of these horrible weapons under any circumstances and to hold those responsible for use to account.

Madam Chairperson,

We also owe it to the victims and to our Convention to condemn, deplore and counter all attempts to undermine and discredit the OPCW. We have recently learnt of one such very serious attempt in the form of a cyber-attack. The planned attack was discovered and prevented only due to the vigilance of the Host State, for which we are grateful. States Parties must speak with one voice in defending the OPCW against such attacks.

Madam Chairperson,

Considering the challenges facing us, Denmark fully stands behind the decision of the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of States Parties on addressing the threat from Chemical Weapons use. We likewise welcome with gratitude the progress reports by the Director-General on the implementation of this decision, most notably the establishment of arrangements enabling attribution for chemical weapons use in Syria as decided by the Conference. We also look forward to receiving further proposals from the Director-General on how to strengthen the Organisations capacity to respond to use of Chemical Weapons anywhere and identify perpetrators.

We believe it essential that the ongoing implementation of this decision is supported by the provision of adequate resources, and we are happy to note that there seems to be broad consensus on this point. We welcome the revised budget proposal of the Director-General and remain open to discussing how best to meet the needs of the Organisation in this respect, including through additional funding.

Madam Chairperson,

Evidently we have our work cut out for us for the Fourth Review Conference. The global ban on Chemical Weapons and the OPCW is under pressure from many sides. It behoves us to make best use of this opportunity to ensure that the OPCW is equipped and ready to address all current and future challenges to the convention in whatever form they may come. Denmark is ready to do its part to achieve and maintain a world free of chemical weapons. Sadly, we are not there yet.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.