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**ROMANIA**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR BRANDUSA PREDESCU  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ROMANIA TO THE OPCW AT THE FOURTH  
SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW  
THE OPERATION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

Mr Chairman,  
Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,

Let me begin by extending, on behalf of the Romanian delegation, congratulations to our Chairman, Ambassador Agustin Vásquez Gómez of El Salvador for his election and assure him of our full support for the important work lying ahead. I would also like to express our appreciation to Ambassador I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja of Indonesia, Chairperson of the Open Ended Working Group for the preparation of the Fourth Review Conference, and to Ambassador Jana Reinišová of the Czech Republic, Chairperson of the Executive Council, for their remarkable work and dedication to prepare the Fourth Review Conference.

Likewise, let me congratulate Ambassador Fernando Arias for the powerful start of his mandate as Director-General of the OPCW Technical Secretariat and tell him that he and his team can count on Romania's unreserved support.

Romania aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. At the same time, I would like to address the Conference in my national capacity.

Romania is a strong advocate of multilateralism and international cooperation. My country attaches a great importance to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention as a unique and effective international instrument in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

Against this background, Romania welcomes the adoption of the OPCW 2019 Programme and Budget by the Conference of the States Parties. The budget, as adopted, not only ensures the conditions for a continued proper functioning of our Organisation but also creates the framework for the Technical Secretariat to implement the decision of June this year. While not ignoring differences of opinion that have been expressed during the process, we nevertheless consider the adoption of the budget for 2019 as a major accomplishment for which the Conference of the States Parties, as the decision-making organ of the OPCW, deserves credit.



Given this constructive momentum and looking into the future—a future my country wishes to be free of any chemical weapons whatsoever!—Romania calls upon the States Parties participating in the Review Conference to contribute to maintaining this momentum so that we are able to adopt a final document that provides the OPCW with the appropriate guidelines for the next years.

Admittedly, this is not an easy task. Since the previous Review Conference, five years ago, in spite of the international endeavours and commitments aimed at combatting the threat of chemical weapons, very serious challenges have persisted. Chemical agents were, in various circumstances, repeatedly used as weapons making victims or even claiming lives in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia, Syria and more recently the United Kingdom. It is obvious that global efforts to eliminate chemical weapons must continue tirelessly and more effectively, with the Chemical Weapons Convention and OPCW at the core of the international undertakings. This imperative can only be pursued if the States Parties continue to work closely together and strive to overcome differences for the sake of the ultimate goal of the Organisation: a world free of chemical weapons.

We should not tire to remind, time and again, that the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable and represents a flagrant breach of the international law. There can be no impunity for it and any individual, entity, group, State or non-State actor, responsible for such acts must be held accountable. The norm established by the Convention is not negotiable. OPCW must continue to play a relevant role in making sure that this is the case.

Romania has actively supported, as a co-sponsor, the decision ‘Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use’ adopted by the Conference of the State Parties to the Convention during its Special Session of June this year. The decision tasks the OPCW to set-up the necessary arrangements to attribute responsibility for the chemical weapons attacks in Syria, while also asking the Organisation to grant attribution-related assistance whenever a State Party affected by the use of chemical weapons requests so. The decision was passed in full respect of the provisions of the Convention, thus having undeniable legitimacy and calling for careful, yet undisputed implementation. Romania strongly advocates this objective and backs up the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat in their endeavours to accomplish it.

Over the next years, capacity building must remain a priority for the OPCW. We consider it to represent one of the most important instruments of support for the State Parties’ efforts to meet the Convention requirements and adapt to the dynamic advancement of science and technology.

In order to secure the efficient implementation of the Convention, the OPCW has to be able to retain the specific knowledge and expertise. In this context, given the relative scarcity of experts in the field, my country is in favour of a more flexible approach to the Tenure Policy so as to enable the Technical Secretariat to have, at all times, access to the best, certified expertise available in order to adequately perform its duties. Moreover, Romania assures the Director-General of its entire support for his commendable efforts to improve the gender and geographic balance of the Organisation’s human resources. We believe that attaining a better balance in this regard does good and also justice to the relevance and profile of the OPCW, both globally and at national level.

Romania is a steady supporter of the OPCW as one of the main actors in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. As a proof of this commitment, over the last years, my country has actively contributed to the Organisation's endeavours to fulfil its responsibilities.

Between 12 and 15 December 2017, a training exercise of the OPCW Rapid Reaction and Assistance Mission was carried out in Câmpulung, Romania. The goal was to assess the work of a quick response and assistance mission under real conditions. The exercise totally fulfilled its purpose and was duly appreciated. It resulted in encouraging perspectives with regard to further specific initiatives to be carried out with Romanian contribution to benefit the goals of the Organisation. The entering into force, on the 2 May 2018, of the Agreement between Romania and the OPCW on the privileges and immunities of the OPCW also smoothed the way for a closer, meaningful cooperation between my country and the Organisation.

We are confident that the current cooperation possibilities under consideration will materialise into concrete projects to the benefit of the OPCW and will consolidate Romania's profile as a solid contributor to the international efforts to implement the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

On 1 January 2019, Romania will take over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for six months. I want to emphasise that, as Presidency of the EU Council, Romania will do its best to act as an honest facilitator and a bridge builder with a view to continuing to strengthen the voice of the European Union in the OPCW while working constructively and in good faith with State Parties from all regional groups.

I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Fourth Review Conference and posted on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you for your attention.

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