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**BULGARIA**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR KRASSIMIR KOSTOV  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA  
TO THE OPCW AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE  
CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW  
THE OPERATION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

Mr Chairperson,  
Mr Director-General,  
Distinguished Delegates,

Bulgaria fully aligns itself with the Statement made on behalf of the European Union. In addition, I would like to make a few remarks in national capacity.

In the first place, I would like to express our full support to H.E. Ambassador Agustín Vázquez Gómez of El Salvador as Chairperson of the Fourth Review Conference and to assure him of our readiness to work with him for a successful outcome of the Conference.

We salute the election of H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias as Director-General of our Organisation and reiterate our full confidence and support to him in pursuing his vision for a stronger OPCW in a world free of chemical weapons that is to be achieved within his first term of office.

We also reaffirm our confidence in the highly professional, objective, impartial, and independent work of the staff of the Technical Secretariat in carrying out their work often under difficult conditions. We are particularly grateful to all those who have ensured and provided the best possible conditions for carrying out our work as delegates to this supreme policy-making forum.

This is the time and place to express gratitude to three esteemed colleagues, Their Excellences Ambassadors Sabine Nölke of Canada, Vusi Bruce Koloane of South Africa, and I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja of Indonesia, under whose wise and careful guidance we worked hard to chart the future priorities of our Organisation and to prepare this Conference.

A special “Thanks!” to Ms. Veronika Stromsíková, Director for Strategy and Policy, and her team for their invaluable support and assistance in the course of those fruitful and enlightening numerous sessions that lay the foundation for achieving an outcome we could all be proud of.



On the eve of the 150th anniversary of the Mendeleev Table, which we will celebrate next year, we have a special word of gratitude to all colleagues from the OPCW and, in particular, to Dr Jonathan Forman, OPCW Science Policy Adviser and Secretary to the SAB, for naming the fifth element on the just published Periodic Table of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention “Bulgarium” in recognition of the fact that my country was the fifth to join the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Paragraph 22 of its Article VIII B obliges us to undertake a review of the operation of the Convention, taking into account the relevant scientific and technological developments.

The past five years have been years of growth and gaining strength for the Convention and the OPCW. They have also been a period of sometimes difficult trials.

Under the leadership of Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, the OPCW and the people of the Technical Secretariat have withstood all challenges and have helped us move closer to achieving the ultimate goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

We welcomed the accession of Somalia, Syria, Myanmar, Angola, and the State of Palestine to the Convention with the hope that each of them will act in good faith, be constructive, and contribute to strengthening the legal norm established 25 years ago in Paris. It is never late for that.

We welcome the participation in the work of this and preceding Conferences and the ensuing contribution that the State of Israel makes as a Signatory State, and we look forward to the materialisation of the pledge that South Sudan made a year ago.

Numerous and valuable are the achievements during the past five years, the most important of which is the progress towards the elimination of all declared chemical weapons.

During this period, Bulgaria has benefitted from its adherence to the Convention, from the assistance and cooperation offered by the Technical Secretariat, and other States Parties and has itself contributed to the success of our joint work and mission.

However, this period also saw hundreds of deaths caused by chemical weapons and chemicals used as weapons by State and non-State factors, who are still to be held accountable for committing war crimes and crimes against humanity by grossly violating the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as Humanitarian and International Law. The world owes this to the victims of the chemical attacks in Syria and Iraq, in Kuala Lumpur, Salisbury, and Amesbury.

The decision “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use” that was adopted by the Fourth Special Session of the Conference last 27 June affirms that whenever a chemical weapons use occurs on the territory of a State Party, those who were the perpetrators, organisers, sponsors, or otherwise involved should be identified. It also underscores the added value of the Secretariat conducting an independent investigation of an alleged use of chemical weapons with a view to facilitating universal attribution of all chemical weapons attacks. We reiterate our full support to Director-General Arias and the Secretariat in fulfilling this decision. Justice must be served.

It is with this same motivation that Bulgaria joined the Paris-based International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

We are very concerned by the cases of non-compliance that have been highlighted here, at the time of the general debate. They have to be addressed in full compliance with the provisions of the Convention.

These alarming instances, the challenges that chemical terrorism poses, as well as the expressed desire by a great number of States Parties to see more and more efficient implementation of all provisions of the Convention, in particular those on the international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under this Convention that we regard with sympathy, are clear indications of the enormous work that we have to accomplish beginning right now, in this Review Conference.

Bulgaria is looking forward to working with you all to produce a strong final document that will reaffirm the norm of the Convention and will strengthen the OPCW and its Secretariat.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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