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POLAND

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MARCIN CZEPELAK
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND 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 Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, I would like to cordially congratulate Ambassador Agustín Vásquez Gómez of El Salvador on taking the distinguished function as the Chairperson of the Fourth Review Conference. Excellency, you can count on active engagement and the full support of the Polish Delegation in the forthcoming days.

Let me also echo words of appreciation for the Ambassador I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja of Indonesia, Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group, for the preparation of the Review Conference that has provided critical elements for further deliberations of this Conference.

Mr Chairperson,

Aligning with the EU statement, I would like to address some issues particularly important for my country.

First and foremost, this Review Conference is to enhance the OPCW credibility and the integrity of the Chemical Weapons Convention. To be successful in this regard, it is our utmost obligation to address the threat from the use of chemical weapons. Ensuring full and prompt implementation of the June Conference of the States Parties decision will be a crucial step towards this direction.

It is indispensable in order to protect the bedrock of the Convention: the international norm against use of chemical weapons.

It is indispensable in order to stop weakening of the whole chemical disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

It is indispensable because our multiple condemnations of the use of chemical weapons failed to provide an effective and lasting deterrence to these horrific acts, in different parts of the world, over the last months.



Secondly, this Conference has to set the scene for the OPCW future; in other words – to ensure its adaptation to challenges and threats emerging from the security environment in the years to come. For many months, there have been conducted fruitful discussions in this regard, in particular within the framework of the Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priorities, which have immensely benefited from the personal commitment of its co-chairs – Distinguished Ambassadors of Canada, Her Excellency Sabine Nölke, and of South Africa His Excellency Vusi Bruce Koloane.

In general, Poland supports key outcomes stemming from these debates. This refers specifically to the issues related to the overall OPCW capabilities development. They are essential to enhance verification regime, to decrease chemical threat, including from non-state actors, to promote international cooperation, and to strengthen chemical security and safety. In this context, the Government of Poland has recently decided to contribute this year with EUR 100,000 to support the new OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology, and to join the group of friends of this new flagship initiative, led by the Distinguished Ambassadors of Canada and Indonesia. This is how we would like to demonstrate our political and practical support to the OPCW Technical Secretariat. It is a sign of our trust and confidence in its dedication, professionalism, and expertise.

Let me stress also the importance Poland attaches to the need for further considerations on the OPCW role as a platform for voluntary consultations and collaboration on a set of other issues related to scope and objective of the Convention. Poland commented upon it already on numerous occasions. Two examples:

On sea dumped chemical weapons – Poland, together with other States Parties, namely Lithuania, Bulgaria, Georgia and Colombia, presented a dedicated working paper, which will be also point of reference for a side event organised later this week.

On central nervous system-acting chemicals, Poland already declared that it is neither developing, producing, stockpiling, nor using these types of chemicals. We remain actively committed to support efforts in that regard within the OPCW, led by Australia and Switzerland.

Mr Chairperson,

Thirdly, Poland sees a strong need today to ensure a strong and unambiguous support of the whole international community for the idea of the world free of chemical weapons. This exactly why my country, similarly to previous years, presented, as its solely sponsor, the United Nations General Assembly Draft Resolution on the Chemical Weapons Convention implementation. For years, the resolution has been contributing to international peace and security. It has been enhancing chemical non-proliferation regime that is based upon the Convention and its implementing body – the OPCW. The adoption of the resolution by the UNGA First Committee in November, with enormous support of Member States, indicates that – despite many controversies – bridges still can be built around the fundamental mission of the OPCW. This constitutes an important message on the eve of the debate during this Conference.

Mister Chairperson,

Concluding, let me leave for a while national capacity, and say a few words as the elected Chairperson of the Review Conference Committee of the Whole. I am looking forward to our close cooperation in the forthcoming days. I encourage all States Parties to constructive engagement during the detailed negotiations. I am convinced this would bring us closer to achieve together successful outcome of the Conference.

Thank you.

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