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**PORTUGAL**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ROSA BATORÉU  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PORTUGAL TO THE OPCW  
AT THE EIGHTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,

In view of the challenging agenda before us, I would like to wish you a successful steering of this session of the Executive Council and reaffirm Portugal's commitment to engage with you constructively throughout your mandate.

I would also like to wish Ambassador Fernando Arias every success as new Director-General of the OPCW. Following in the footsteps of his predecessor, may he find the inspiration and the means necessary to achieve tangible results during his tenure, for which Portugal is certainly most willing to lend him its full support.

Madam Chairperson,

Portugal aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the Ambassador of Austria on behalf of the European Union and would like to add the following remarks on its national capacity.

Portugal recognises the essential role of the OPCW not only in ensuring global chemical security, but also in addressing evolving challenges which increasingly demand swift attention. This Organisation currently faces a range of tasks and responsibilities that call for a sustainable, future-looking policy framework, as well as for the corresponding appropriate resources. Decisions on these topics must not be delayed in ways that could imperil the important role of the OPCW in the international security architecture.

Portugal believes that the upcoming Fourth Review Conference presents an opportunity not to be missed or postponed, in order to secure a solid path towards guaranteeing the full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We commend Ambassador Puja of Indonesia for his outstanding work in chairing the Open-Ended Working Group, and we trust that all efforts carried out so far in preparation for the Review Conference will allow us to bridge the remaining gaps and lead to a successful outcome.

Acknowledging the use of chemical weapons as a threat which cannot be tolerated under any circumstance is a matter for which neither hesitations nor divergences should stand in its way. It was in this spirit that Portugal sponsored the Decision adopted by the Conference of States Parties last June. We must now proceed to implement it in a timely and efficient way.



The terrible incidents that unfolded this year on European soil, but also elsewhere, have given us more than enough proof of how urgent it is to uphold the ban on chemical weapons by displaying clear resolve and determination. Portugal reiterates its solidarity with the United Kingdom and deems the findings of the OPCW Technical Assistance Team deployed upon British request to be of the utmost concern. This question is central to the future work of this Organisation and for its relevance in terms of disarmament and non-proliferation and requires an appropriate follow-up as a matter of priority.

In relation to the cyber operation perpetrated against the headquarters of the OPCW whose particulars were made public this past week, Portugal joins the expressions of concern relayed by the European Union at the highest level.

Portugal welcomes the progress achieved throughout the many activities of the OPCW, including in connection with education and outreach and with key ongoing projects, such as the new Centre for Chemistry and Technology. Notwithstanding the positive achievements and prospects, core aspects of the OPCW mandate still call for our attention, especially the need to tackle the persistent use of chemical weapons. In particular, we share the concerns arising from the reports of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria, and associate ourselves in supporting and encouraging the important role of the FFM and of the Declaration Assessment Team.

We are also looking forward to engage in the discussions related to the future tenure policy of this Organisation and we very much thank the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat for the report that was prepared on the subject. It contains valuable recommendations with a view to address recurring pressures and problems derived from the current tenure approach, which we believe deserve a comprehensive reflection.

To conclude, Madam Chairperson, we look forward to the forthcoming Conference of the States Parties and the Review Conference, trusting they will endow the OPCW with the means required to fulfill the tasks it was given as well as the objectives enshrined in the Convention.

I would kindly request that this declaration be circulated as an official document of the Executive Council and published on the website of the Organisation.

Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson.

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