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NEW ZEALAND

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR LYNDAL WALKER
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Thank you, Chair.

At the outset, let me congratulate Director-General, Fernando Arias, on the assumption of his duties. Director-General, New Zealand pledges its full support to you and your team, and we wish you every success in your role.

We wish to express our appreciation to Ambassador Puja of Indonesia for his able leadership of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Fourth Review Conference. We reiterate New Zealand's full support for this process. We, like others here today, wish to see an ambitious Review Conference outcome that reflects the OPCW's achievements and challenge – past and present – and that effectively addresses new and emerging future challenges. We look forward to working constructively with all States Parties to achieve this outcome.

We also wish to thank the delegation of Chile for its efforts in facilitating the negotiations of the 2019 budget programme to date. The OPCW needs to be adequately resourced in order to deliver on its mandate and to implement the decision on an attribution arrangement as adopted by the Conference of States Parties in June this year. We hope that all States Parties will show flexibility and willingness to secure the additional financial resources the OPCW needs in this regard.

Any use of chemical weapons is highly repugnant and in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and other relevant international law. New Zealand has condemned recent cases where chemical weapons have been used in Syria and in the United Kingdom.

New Zealand is deeply concerned about the impunity with which perpetrators have carried out recent chemical weapons attacks. That is why we supported the Decision of the Conference of States Parties in June. We are also pleased to announce that New Zealand has recently joined the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons. Our participation underlines New Zealand's commitment to hold to account those individuals, groups or governments which breach international norms on the use of chemical weapons. We look forward to working with partners in pursuit of this goal.

With regard to the attack in the United Kingdom, we note that the latest Technical Assistance Visit report has confirmed the UK's Government's findings relating to the chemical agent responsible for the tragic death of Dawn Sturgess in July and the hospitalisation of one other



person. We have every confidence in the conclusions of the UK Government and the Technical Assistance Visit team.

Further in regard to Syria, it is unacceptable that there remain 22 identified gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies in Syria's declaration (as was confirmed by the recently issued report of the Declaration Assessment Team). We reiterate that the Syrian Government must cooperate fully, and in good faith, in order to finally resolve these issues in line with its obligations as a state party to the Chemical Weapons Convention and as required in the recent decision of the Conference of States Parties.

Finally, we note that the OPCW also needs to have the resources and tools in place to deter, detect and prevent malicious activity that seeks to undermine the Organisation. New Zealand takes this opportunity to add its voice to those who have denounced the attempted cyber operation attributed to Russia against the OPCW earlier in the year. This malicious activity, which reporting suggests was carried out by the Russian military's General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate, joins the list of activity recently attributed to the Russian government showing a pattern of malicious behaviour and disregard for global values. New Zealand expects countries will act in a way that upholds the integrity of the international rules-based order.

Thank you, Chair.

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