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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR KENNETH D. WARD
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE
OPCW AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE
STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS
CONVENTION UNDER AGENDA ITEM 11**

Mr Chairman,

The United States fully aligns itself with the joint statement presented to the Conference by the French Delegation. We urge all States Parties to subscribe to this Joint Statement. We thank France for its leadership.

The purpose of this Review Conference is to collectively reflect on the progress this Organisation has made towards achieving a world free of chemical weapons over the last five years. We have had some real successes. We have made significant progress towards destroying the world's remaining chemical weapons stockpiles. We have made great strides in strengthening the implementation of all the provisions of the Convention. We have worked tirelessly to uphold the norm against chemical weapons use, and to hold those who do use such weapons accountable for their actions. This is our charge as States Parties to this Convention. During the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties, responsible nations overwhelmingly condemned the use of chemical weapons worldwide and endorsed strengthening the OPCW's tools to respond to such use. Last week States Parties to this Convention also overwhelmingly approved the OPCW's 2019 budget, which provides funding to implement the attribution mandate in the decision adopted by the June Special Session of the Conference.

Mr Chairman,

We cannot ignore these achievements. But we also cannot ignore reality. Chemical weapons use, including by a State Party in this very room, remains the single greatest threat to the full implementation of this Convention. We cannot, as responsible nations, pretend otherwise. Since the last time we gathered for a Review Conference, chemical weapons have been used on multiple occasions, and in four different regions of the world. This is not progress. It is the antithesis of progress. If we are unwilling in our report to acknowledge this crisis—because that is indeed what we are facing, a crisis—then we have collectively failed to achieve the purpose of this Review Conference. The United States hoped, after our recent successes in upholding the norm against chemical weapons use, that this Conference could come together to make a strong statement about where we stand. That chemical weapons use will not be tolerated by States Parties to this Convention. Instead, we find ourselves



incredibly disappointed, and indeed saddened, that we were unable to speak with one voice against chemical weapons use. If the price for a consensus report is that some States Parties refuse to acknowledge the greatest threat this Convention has ever faced, it is, quite simply, a price responsible nations cannot pay.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

I ask that my statement be designated an official document of this Review Conference and posted on the external server and the public website.

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