



OPCW

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RUSSIAN FEDERATION

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR A. V. SHULGIN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE OPCW
AT THE SIXTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Director-General,
Madam Chairperson,
Distinguished Delegates,

The Russian Federation is an initiator of the work to enter additions to the schedules of chemicals that pose a threat to the regime of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”). As early as May 2018, in response to a request by the Director-General to the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), the Russian Federation submitted extensive material (over 300 pages) specifying several hundreds of chemical compounds mentioned in scientific literature. We regret that this proposal was left hanging.

The Russian Federation has carefully examined the proposal by the United States, Canada, and the Netherlands to enter changes to Schedule 1 of the Annex on Chemicals to the Convention (hereinafter “the Annex on Chemicals”). We are forced, however, to note that the initiative to change the Convention’s schedules was narrowed, as it was limited to just two families of toxic agents, even though—as can be seen from the sources that we provided and the conclusions of the SAB—there are many more.

We promptly submitted to the Director-General additional information for the joint proposal in line with paragraph 5(a) of Article XV of the Convention. However, in spite of the requirements set out in the Convention, this material was not taken into account by the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”) when preparing the evaluation of the Western initiative, which as a result is not comprehensive. For some reason, the materials were not reviewed at today’s special meeting of the Executive Council (hereinafter “the Council”).

We see certain political overtones in the proposal by the United States, Canada, and the Netherlands. The proposal seeks to put under control only two abstract representatives of these families, not the full range of toxic chemicals that have been researched and patented in many Western States Parties to the Convention, including so-called “Novichoks”. In light of the well known vociferous statements by Theresa May regarding the incidents in Salisbury and Amesbury, we find this limited initiative to be politically motivated. Moreover, as follows from paragraph 6 of the preamble of the draft decision of the Council, for some reason the focus is placed on the technical assistance provided by the Secretariat to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland within the framework of the



“verification” of its national investigation. We are forced to once again reiterate the position that we have outlined several times now that paragraph 38(e) of Article VIII of the Convention, under which this type of work is carried out, does not assign the Secretariat a mandate to participate in national investigations or the confirmation of their findings.

Furthermore, not one of the reports prepared by the Secretariat on the results of the technical assistance provided specifies properties confirming the presence of this exact stated chemical; yet the Porton Down scientists provided Secretariat representatives with analytical data, including gas chromatography mass spectrometry (GS-MS), liquid chromatography mass spectrometry (LS-MS), and nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy results (paragraph 27 of reports TAV/03/18 and TAV/03B/18).

The specific chemicals that the United States, Canada, and the Netherlands are proposing to put under control also give rise to serious questions. In particular, as an example of Family 2, a chemical with a completely unknown structural formula is indicated, with an improbably large molecular mass.

We have attempted to clarify this matter via briefings and consultations held by the Secretariat and the authors of the decision on the day before the Council meeting. Specifically: Based on what scientific literature is this a known toxic chemical? Has this chemical been researched by the States submitting the joint proposal? Based on what scientific research is it known that it can be defined as a chemical warfare agent and included on the schedules? To our great regret, we have yet to receive any clear-cut responses.

With the absence of references, the examples that were presented are abstract chemicals that realistically may not exist (or possess toxic properties) taking into account the complex structure (as an example, the molecular mass of Vx is 267 g/mol, the substance detected in Salisbury has a molecular mass of 224 g/mol, yet the example of family 2 is 657 g/mol, which exceeds the properties of known toxic chemicals in this group by three times).

We believe that when selecting examples, the main principles for chemicals subject to inclusion in Schedule 1 were violated. In particular, when reviewing the question as to whether or not a toxic chemical or precursor should be scheduled, one must take into account whether “[it] possesses such lethal or incapacitating toxicity as well as other properties that would enable it to be used as a chemical weapon” (subparagraph 1(b(ii)) of Part A of the Annex on Chemicals).

In paragraph 3.5 of the Note by the Director-General on the Evaluation of the Proposal Submitted by Canada, the Netherlands, and the United States of America for a Change to the Annex on Chemicals of the Chemical Weapons Convention (EC-M-62/DG.1, dated 14 December 2018), it is noted that “if the proposal were to be adopted, the Secretariat would ensure that CAS Registry Numbers are assigned to the two chemicals provided as examples in the proposal, before entry into force of the proposed changes to the Annex on Chemicals”. Thus it is proposed that CAS Registry Numbers are assigned to non-existent chemicals, while in the current version of the Convention, CAS numbers are assigned to real chemicals for which complete information is available.

On 29 November 2018, the Russian Federation submitted its own proposal on changing the Schedules of Chemicals that was much more exhaustive and includes five families of chemicals, including the ones in the joint proposal. As before, we find it advisable to consider

two proposals with overlapping content as a “bundle”. This would not only be logical, but it would also save some of the Organisation’s financial resources. Due to formalities, this reasonable request was denied. We express our regret in that regard.

In conclusion, we would emphasise once again that the joint proposal should have been considered with due account for the additional information submitted by the Russian Federation. It would have then been evaluated adequately. That is exactly the way we can ensure the strengthening of the Convention and come closer to achieving the goal of ridding the world of the threat of the use of this type of weapon of mass destruction.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

We request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Sixty-Second Meeting of the Executive Council and published on the OPCW website.

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