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GERMANY

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTINE WEIL
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY
TO THE OPCW AT THE NINETIETH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished colleagues,

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union presented by the head of the Romanian delegation, Ambassador Brandusa Predescu.

We thank Director-General Arias for his comprehensive report to this Executive Council (“the Council”).

As this is the last regular Council chaired by Ambassador Jana Reinišová, we also wish to express our gratitude and our high appreciation for having guided the Council through the rough sea of last year – and for having done so in an impartial and professional way.

At this first regular Council in 2019, we need to know where we stand with our efforts to strengthen the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) with the absolute prohibition of the use of chemical weapons at its core.

We have just received the final report of the FFM on the Douma events that took place on 7 April 2018. This horrific chemical weapons attack caused the death of so many men, women, and children and injured hundreds more. In its very detailed and comprehensive report, the FFM confirms after thorough, in-depth analysis – including environmental and biomedical samples analysis results, witness testimonies, as well as toxicological and ballistic analyses – that chlorine was used as a chemical weapon.

We commend the FFM for its very professional work under difficult conditions in Douma, its technical expertise, and its independent, impartial and highly professional analysis. We have full confidence in its expertise and analysis.

The Douma attack was not a unique event but one more in a long list of confirmed chemical weapon attacks in Syria. We, the States Parties to the Convention, must not stand idly by while the use of these most hideous weapons of mass destruction continues.

That is why we took action last June. At the Special Session of the Conference of States Parties, we decided to address the threat from chemical weapons use. The findings of the



Douma report only make it more urgent that this Decision be implemented quickly and comprehensively. The perpetrators of this attack – like those of all previous attacks – must know that they will be identified and never enjoy impunity for their horrible crimes.

We thank Director-General Arias for his report on the progress of the implementation of the Decision. Germany welcomes and supports the creation of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), and we look forward to an early commencement of its work.

The Special Decision also demanded that Syria immediately cease all use of chemical weapons and declare its entire chemical weapons programme. We continue to urge Syria to undertake credible steps towards clarifying all remaining gaps and inconsistencies in its initial declaration. Syria must fulfil all its obligations under the Convention. The dialogue with the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”), continued in Beirut last month, must finally lead to tangible results.

In January and February, with two Special Sessions of the Council, we went to great lengths to find common ground on amending the Schedule 1 list of the Annex on Chemicals to the Convention, for the first time since the entry into force of the Convention. The Secretariat supported these efforts with its professional, impartial and independent analysis. The Council on 14 January recommended, by consensus, the adoption of the joint proposal by Canada, the Netherlands, and the United States. Germany considers these proposed changes to the Schedules to be necessary and reasonable. The Council on 25 February did not adopt a draft decision proposal submitted by the Russian Federation for a change to the Schedule 1 list of the Annex on Chemicals to the Convention. We regret that Russia was not willing to take into account the technical evaluation of the Secretariat on the Russian proposal number 5 contained in its draft decision. Intensive discussions prior to the vote clearly pointed to a solution that would have been agreeable: consensus on proposals 1 to 4 was within reach. We regret that Russia has chosen not to take this path and instead insisted on keeping its proposal 5 in the draft decision, which does not meet the criteria for being listed in the Schedules.

The number of challenges for the OPCW is only further increasing. We have to ensure that the Organisation has the appropriate means. Germany just recently contributed one million euros to enhance the OPCW’s response capabilities against the use of chemical weapons and to ensure a swift and effective response to requests for assistance. With this contribution, Germany wishes to increase its support for the OPCW’s capacities to assist States Parties in the implementation of their obligations under the Convention.

Germany will also support the new OPCW Laboratory and its upgrade into a Centre for Chemistry and Technology. We thank the Director-General for his initial explanation on the status of the project and we look forward to receiving further information on the concept and the planning process.

At the same time, we know that further support is needed, also in other fields. Besides an appropriate budget, the Director-General needs some flexibility to retain the special expertise of his personnel. We agree that the current tenure policy is too rigid to ensure this goal. That is why Germany supports the idea of starting a facilitation process on the issue. We would expect the Secretariat to prepare the ground with some initial thoughts and suggestions.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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