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SWITZERLAND

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HEINZ WALKER-NEDERKOORN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SWITZERLAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETIETH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

**UNDER AGENDA ITEM 6(G): THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT'S ACTIVITIES:
UPDATE ON THE OPCW FACT-FINDING MISSION IN SYRIA**

Madam Chairperson,

The latest report of the Fact Finding Mission (FFM) regarding the alleged use of chemical weapons in Douma, Syria, on 7 April 2018, once again draws alarming conclusions. After a thorough, impartial, and professional investigation, the FFM confirmed that the evaluation and analysis of all information provides reasonable grounds to conclude that a toxic chemical has been used as a weapon, and that it was likely molecular chlorine.

The Swiss Government is gravely concerned about these findings. Switzerland condemns in the strongest possible terms any use of chemical weapons by any actor in the Syrian Arab Republic. Such acts constitute a serious violation of international law and a war crime in the context of armed conflict.

The repeated use of chemical weapons in Syria challenges the long-standing prohibition of chemical weapons and undermines the integrity of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”). The members of this Organisation must shoulder their responsibilities by condemning, in the strongest possible way, this intolerable violation of international law and by ensuring compliance with the provisions established by the Convention.

The OPCW’s investigations in Syria paint a clear picture, and we must do everything in our power to put an end to this abhorrent and cynical practice. The international community needs to take resolute action to ensure accountability and bring those responsible on all sides of the conflict to justice. Impunity for these crimes is simply not acceptable.

Switzerland thanks the Fact-Finding Mission for its hard work under difficult conditions and wishes to express its highest esteem. We reiterate our full confidence in the work and findings of the Technical Secretariat, which has consistently conducted its missions in the context of the FFM, the Declaration Assessment Team, and the Joint Investigative Mechanism in a professional and impartial way, in full respect of its mandate.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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