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BELGIUM

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN LEPAGE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BELGIUM 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 Chairperson,

Thank you and the Ambassadors of Indonesia and Poland for their efforts aimed at arriving at a final consensual document. Unfortunately, it was impossible to meet this goal.

It is no secret to anyone that, for historical reasons, Belgium attaches great importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) and to the OPCW. Today is therefore a very gloomy day, but as the Ambassador of Bangladesh said this morning, this is not the time to give up. This is in indeed why Belgium—which aligns itself with the statement made by Austria on behalf of the European Union—supports the statement delivered by France. That concise and comprehensive text takes an equally balanced approach to the history as well as the present and future of the OPCW. I invite all States Parties of good will today to join the long list of 57 States Parties that have already voiced their support for the French statement. In doing so, they will demonstrate a concrete commitment to defending the full implementation of the Convention. It will also be a tremendous sign of support to the Director-General and his staff. To those hesitating to associate themselves with the statement, I would answer that they should not fear taking that step. We must all make this small effort, in memory of the too many victims of chemical weapons use, but also bearing in mind future generations. To rid the world of chemical weapons is to keep us all, and each of the countries we represent at the OPCW, a bit safer.

Finally, Mr Chairperson, based on the principle that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed, I would propose, as the United Kingdom has already suggested to you, to simplify the last line of the paragraph on the covering page of your report RC-4/3, dated today.

I would request that this statement be considered as an official document of the Fourth Review Conference.

I thank you for your attention.

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