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**BULGARIA**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR KRASSIMIR KOSTOV  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA  
TO THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,  
Mr Director-General,  
Distinguished Colleagues,

Bulgaria fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union delivered by Her Excellency Ambassador Paivi Marjaana Kaukoranta, Permanent Representative of Finland to the OPCW. In addition, I would like to make the following remarks in national capacity:

This is the first time in more than 10 years that Bulgaria makes a statement in its capacity as a full member of the Executive Council (“the Council”) and I am particularly glad to begin it by congratulating you, esteemed Ambassador Perugini, for your election as Chairman of the Council, and to assure you of our support and readiness to work with you for a fruitful outcome. *Auguri, Eccellenza, e buon lavoro!*

I would also like to thank the Director-General for his opening statement, his clear vision, and resoluteness to tackle the complex issues facing the Organisation. Ambassador Arias and his staff at the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) have our full confidence and support.

120 years ago, upon initiative of Tsar Nicolas II of Russia, the First Hague Conference took place and adopted what became known as the Hague Convention of 1899. Largely based on the Lieber Code, which was signed and issued by President Abraham Lincoln during the American Civil War, the Hague Convention of 1899 and the subsequent one of 1907 are symbols of the need for restrictions on war and the desirability of avoiding it altogether. Bulgaria was among the participants in the Conference and the countries that ratified the documents that it adopted.

100 years later Bulgaria was the fifth country to join the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”).

This is the reason why we are so passionate in defending the common achievements in the fight to eradicate the chemical weapons and to uphold the regime of the Convention.

This is the reason why today the one and only issue that is of utmost importance for us is the question of compliance with the provisions of the Convention.



This is the reason why we condemn the use of chemical weapons that have taken place in recent years—in particular in Syria, where thousands of people have been gassed to death and many more have suffered the horrors of chemical attacks.

We greeted with hope the appreciation by the Director-General of the Syrian Arab Republic's provision of new information and documentation that could contribute to the resolution of some outstanding issues as stated in document EC-91/DG.23 (dated 5 July 2019). Unfortunately, this same document clearly demonstrates that there is no progress with regard to the open issues and, in fact, a new issue—about the non-declared gas cylinders—has been raised. Furthermore, we do not accept the argumentation with which the Syrian authorities have refused to issue a visa to the Coordinator of the Investigation and Identification Team in violation of the provisions of paragraph 7 of the UNSCR 2118.

In this context, we underline once again the legality of the decision adopted by the Fourth Special Session of the Conference on 27 June 2018 (C-SS-4/DEC.3) putting in place arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. We reject the attempts of a few States Parties who challenge the validity of this decision with political and pseudo-legal affirmations thus increasing the rupture in the body of the Organisation that they created themselves.

*Pacta sunt servanda!*

This basic principle of international law, enshrined in Article 26 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of the Treaties, adopted 50 years ago, is totally valid for the Chemical Weapons Convention and the decisions of the OPCW Policy Making Organs. That is why we appeal to stop all attacks on the June 2018 decision that makes the Convention stronger in the face of the current challenges.

The good faith!

With it in mind, we received with profound regret the communication opposing the decision of the Council of last 14 January 2019 (EC-M-62/DEC.1) adopted with consensus—a most welcome occurrence claimed to be desirable by most of us, approving the proposal jointly submitted by the United States of America, Canada, and the Netherlands to add two families of toxic chemicals to Schedule 1 of the Annex on Chemicals to the Convention. We are looking forward to working with all States Parties for adopting this proposal and decision at the forthcoming Twenty-Fourth Conference of the States Parties, thus equipping the Organisation to meet better the challenges that are becoming ever more apparent.

Furthermore, as a country that in the past three years has consistently joined as signatory the proposals advanced by Australia and Switzerland on the central nervous system-acting chemicals and appreciating the extensive work done by the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) on this problem with very clear conclusions, we declare now our support to the initiative of the United States and other States Parties to move further with this issue and take priority action against the use of aerosolized CNS-acting chemicals that have dreadful effects, as testified personally by one of our esteemed colleagues, and are even deadly.

The good faith!

It was with it in mind that we received the proposal of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Republic of China entitled “Establishment of an Open-Ended Working Group to Identify and Prioritise the Implementation of Items on which Consensus is Achievable among States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention” (document EC-91/NAT.3, dated 7 June 2019). We saw in it a germ of something valuable, the desire to move beyond the current difficulties and engage in a constructive dialogue on the future of our Organisation.

However, during the consultations that Ambassador Agustín Vásquez Gómez of El Salvador and Ambassador I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja of Indonesia conducted, we saw as well that, in fact, some colleagues and State Parties want to go ahead while turning our sights backwards. We cannot move forward if our sights are fixed on the past. We do not need that. We have to turn our sights to the future and start anew making steady progress. We firmly believe that this is achievable.

In order to resolve this obvious contradiction and to preserve the valuable grain in the original idea, we propose to establish an Open-ended working group entitled “CWC post ‘23” and to reappoint the two co-facilitators. We have full trust in their capability to steer the work in such a group, and with the wise help from the Secretariat as has been always the case up to now, towards finding the necessary agreement among the States Parties, to satisfy the pressing needs and concerns and turn our visions to the period beyond 2023 which might seem distant but is already signalling the need to start tackling the challenges of what is in store for the Convention and the world freed of chemical weapons.

This group could also tackle my humble personal idea to change the rules of procedure and get rid of the credentials that the permanent representatives have to present when they are delegates to the Conference and even in order to participate in the sessions of the Council. We could spare some considerable amount of paper and work.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson!

I would kindly ask that this statement be designated as an official document of this Council session and posted on both, the external server and the OPCW public website.

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