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CZECH REPUBLIC

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JANA REINIŠOVÁ
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETY-FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the Ambassador of Finland on behalf of the European Union. I would like to make a few remarks in our national capacity.

First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Perugini, on your election as the Chair of the Executive Council (“the Council”) and wish you all the best in your new role. I know all too well how difficult this job is but I am sure that your rich experience both here in The Hague and from your previous positions will help you guide us successfully through the meetings in the coming year.

In March, the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) issued its final report about the incident in Douma on 7 April 2018 which concluded that there are reasonable grounds to assume that chlorine was used as a chemical weapon. Since then, members of the FFM and other Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) staff have come under unprecedented personal attacks which are completely unacceptable. Let me stress here that the Czech Republic has full confidence in the work of the Director-General and the Secretariat staff and we highly value their professionalism and independence.

Staying with the issue of Syria, we have noted with concern the recent report of the Declaration Assessment Team which highlighted the continuing gaps and discrepancies in relation to the Syrian declarations and also the report from the inspection to the SSRC where traces were found of a substance which can be a primary hydrolysis product of Schedule 1 chemicals.

Furthermore, we regret that Syria has refused to issue a visa to the head of the IIT in complete contradiction to the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”), the decision of the Conference of States Parties and the UN Security Council resolution 2118. We call on the Syrian Arab Republic to reconsider this decision and to cooperate fully with the Secretariat. We welcome the latest progress report of the IIT and we look forward to future updates on the results of their work.



Turning to administrative issues, we would like to thank the Director-General for presenting the Draft Programme and Budget for 2020 last Friday. We consider the proposal a good basis for negotiations in the run-up to the Conference of States Parties. We would also like to commend the Director-General for his efforts in improving the geographical representation and gender balance among Secretariat staff. We welcome his recent non-paper on workforce management and we are ready for further discussions with other States Parties and the Secretariat with the aim of ensuring that the Secretariat is able to retain crucial specialised expertise and attract high-quality diverse candidates for open positions.

To conclude, since this is my last Council session before the end of my posting here in The Hague, I would like to once again thank you all very much for your cooperation during the more than 4 years that I have spent here and wish you and the Organisation all the best in the future.

Thank you, Mr Chair, and I would like to ask that this statement be made an official document of this session and be posted on the OPCW External Server and public website.

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