



OPCW

Executive Council

Ninety-First Session

9 – 12 July 2019

EC-91/NAT.31

9 July 2019

ENGLISH only

PORTUGAL

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ROSA BATORÉU
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PORTUGUESE REPUBLIC
TO THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

Portugal aligns itself with the statement made earlier this morning by the Ambassador of Finland on behalf of the European Union (EU).

Before I go onto my national remarks, I would like to register my appreciation for the outstanding work done by Ambassador Jana Reinišová at the helm of this Executive Council (“the Council”). I also wish to commend the new chairperson Ambassador Andrea Perugini for taking up this demanding job. Knowing his diplomatic skills and longstanding experience, I am certain he will deliver a strong leadership and tangible results.

A word as well to emphasise Portugal’s continued appreciation for the work, competence, and professionalism of the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, and of the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) of the OPCW.

The use of chemical weapons anywhere, at anytime, by anyone, under any circumstances is unacceptable, but the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) continues to be confronted with dangerous threats to its integrity. As underlined in the EU statement, preventing impunity and the re-emergence of chemical weapons must be at the heart of our endeavours, and a priority to be shared by all States Parties. To this effect, the Decision adopted by the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of States Parties, dated 27 June 2018, provides an indispensable layer for securing full and unequivocal compliance with the Convention.

Portugal expects that the Investigation and Identification Team will be able to work unhindered and fulfil its established mandate under the capable leadership of Ambassador Oñate, as it is required by last year’s Decision.

Furthermore, we take note of the Director-General’s reports on the elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme and associate ourselves in supporting and encouraging the important work of the Fact-Finding Missions and of the Declaration Assessment Team. The briefing given to States Parties, at the end of May, on the results and activities relating to Syria was a reflection of the professionalism and independence of the Secretariat, and we lend our full trust to its impartial assessments.



Portugal expresses its appreciation for the efforts carried out by Ambassador Puja of Indonesia and Ambassador Vásquez Gómez of El Salvador to further the work of the OPCW, and we would like to encourage both co-facilitators to continue with their pragmatic approach. Portugal wishes to highlight the point already made by the EU that our deliberations on the work of the OPCW should be future oriented.

We broadly welcome the recent proposals by the Director-General in order to ensure that the Secretariat can resort to a diverse and qualified work force. For that end, the establishment of an Open-Ended Working Group could provide the necessary framework for the discussion of this subject, along with other agreeable topics.

Finally, I would like to thank the Director-General for his recent presentation of next year's draft budget. We certainly hope that the upcoming facilitations to be conducted by Portugal and Poland will lead to a fruitful and consensual outcome.

I would kindly request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Council and published on the website of the Organisation.

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

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