



### **OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL TO THE NINETY-SECOND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,

1. I warmly welcome all delegations to the Ninety-Second Session of the Executive Council.
2. At the outset, I would like to thank Ambassador Andrea Perugini for his continuing able leadership and guidance of the Council.
3. As per usual practice, the post-summer period has mainly been dedicated to the OPCW Programme and Budget. States Parties are in receipt of the draft with budgetary proposals to finance our activities in the year 2020. During the informal consultations, the Secretariat has provided further details and information to States Parties as and when requested. I would like to thank the co-facilitators, Mr Marcin Kawałowski from the Permanent Representation of Poland and Mr Daniel Baptista from the Permanent Representation of Portugal, for their dedicated efforts. A briefing will be provided to the Council during this session on the progress made in the budget process. States Parties have provided feedback and comments, and I wish to thank them for their constructive contributions.
4. The Secretariat has introduced a number of key strategic financing proposals for the consideration of States Parties. These proposals aim to bolster the Organisation's programmatic and financial strength and address the issue of future programme and budgets at zero real growth. Such an approach would appropriately reflect the responsibilities and difficulties placed on the Organisation due to year-over-year price increases and additional mandated activities. The introduction of a major capital investment fund will help plan for and fund long-term capital replacements that are becoming necessary and require attention. We also need to ensure that the Working Capital Fund remains strong to allow for liquidity, should receipt of assessed contributions lag. Finally, the transition to a biennial programme and budget cycle for the Organisation is put forward to States Parties as a means for longer term programmatic planning and organisational efficiency.
5. During the intersessional period, a visit was undertaken by a delegation of the Executive Council to the People's Republic of China, pursuant to decision



EC-67/DEC.6 (dated 15 February 2012). This visit was aimed at assessing the status of efforts to destroy chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China. The visit included briefings and interactions with senior officials in China and a site tour of the Haerbaling Abandoned Chemical Weapons Destruction Facility, located in Jilin Province. The delegation was led by our Chairperson. In follow-up, a report by the Chairperson of the Executive Council, EC-92/3, was published on 8 October 2019. The Chairperson thanked China for the warm hospitality accorded to the delegation and expressed his appreciation for the cooperation between Japan and China in resolving this complex issue. I wish to add my voice to his commendation. I also wish to commend both China and Japan for their commitment to achieving the goals of the Convention.

6. The Conference of the States Parties at its Fourth Special Session adopted a decision entitled “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use” (C-SS-4/DEC.3, dated 27 June 2018). In accordance with paragraph 24 of that decision, I have provided my latest report to the Executive Council (EC-92/DG.26, dated 27 September 2019 and Corr.1, dated 4 October 2019).
7. As was agreed after a request by States Parties during the July 2018 Executive Council regular session, the Secretariat has provided briefings to States Parties regarding the Syrian Arab Republic’s chemical file ahead of each regular session of the Council. The last briefing took place on 3 October, during which presentations were given on all activities related to the Syrian Arab Republic’s chemical file.
8. The Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) has been looking into a number of incidents, including two incidents in Khirbat Masasinah, on 7 July 2017 and 4 August 2017; one incident in Qalib Al-Thawr, Al-Salamiyah, on 9 August 2017; one incident in Yarmouk, Damascus, on 22 October 2017; one incident in Al-Balil, Souran, on 8 November 2017; one incident in Aleppo, on 24 November 2018; and one incident in Kabanah, on 19 May 2019. The FFM has been analysing the information collected regarding all aforementioned and other allegations of incidents still under assessment. The FFM is awaiting sample analysis results from the last deployments, is planning further deployments, and will report on the results in due course. A Note on the FFM activities has been issued (S/1798/2019, dated 3 October 2019).
9. With regard to the unauthorised disclosure of an internal document related to the investigations led by the FFM, the internal investigation that I have ordered is still ongoing, and is making progress. States Parties will be informed of its completion in due time.
10. The Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) continues to investigate several incidents, as identified in the Note by the Secretariat issued in June this year (Annex 2 of EC-91/S/3, dated 28 June 2019). In this regard, the IIT is actively collecting and examining information. The FFM has made all relevant data and information available to the IIT with regard to these incidents.
11. Additionally, letters have been sent to all States Parties, inviting them to share with the Secretariat information potentially relevant these incidents. I wish to thank those States Parties that have already provided information relevant to the work and mandate of the IIT. Contacts with international, regional, and local sources have also

been established for assistance that will facilitate the conduct of investigations and subsequent analysis.

12. To ensure that all aspects of its independent investigations adhere to objective standards and fully respect impartiality, the IIT has developed appropriate working methods. These methods are related to information management, evidence collection, documentation, and chain of custody. In developing them, confidentiality and security requirements for the storage and use of information provided by other entities were taken into account. An investigation and evidence management system will ensure the proper control, reliability, and authenticity of records. As the work of the IIT progresses, a back-up plan is being implemented in order to enhance security. A Note on the IIT activities has been issued by the Secretariat (EC-92/S/8, dated 3 October 2019).
13. The Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) has also continued its work to clarify gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies arising from the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration on its chemical weapons programme and subsequent submissions. On 22 August 2019, a technical meeting was held with a delegation from the Syrian Permanent Representation to the OPCW. The meeting related to the preparation and splitting of samples collected by the DAT during the twenty-first round of consultations. In follow-up, activities related to the off-site analysis of the samples took place at the OPCW Laboratory in the presence of the Syrian representatives. Subsequently, on 30 August 2019, the samples were shipped to OPCW designated laboratories for analysis.
14. On 26 September, I sent a letter to the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic. I informed him of the Secretariat's intention to conduct the twenty-second round of consultations in Syria from 14 to 23 October. I hope that the Syrian Arab Republic will use this opportunity to provide the necessary information to help resolve outstanding issues. The Secretariat remains fully committed to ensuring the full implementation of all declaration requirements and to assisting the Syrian Arab Republic with fulfilling its obligations under the Convention. A report of the work of the DAT during the reporting period has been made available to the Council (EC-92/HP/DG.2, dated 27 September 2019).
15. Pursuant to EC-M-43/DEC.1 (dated 24 July 2014), regarding the destruction and verification of 12 declared chemical weapons production facilities, the Secretariat has been monitoring and maintaining the remote monitoring systems installed at four sealed underground structures on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. In line with the Council decision, the mandate related to those activities will come to an end by summer 2020.
16. Turning to destruction, as at 31 August 2019, the Secretariat had verified the destruction by possessor States Parties of 70,327 MT, or 97.27%, of all declared chemical weapons.
17. As we near the goal of the total elimination of declared chemical weapons stockpiles, the OPCW will continue to intensify its focus on preventing their re-emergence. It is crucial to guarantee that the Organisation maintains the proper resources to fulfil its mandate on this field of activities, as this will remain one of its core responsibilities in

the future. We owe it to the victims of chemical weapons use and to future generations.

18. Yesterday, the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism was briefed by INTERPOL about the support it is providing to law enforcement agencies around the world to prevent and respond to chemical terrorism. I thank Ambassador Oji Nyimenuate Ngofa, Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the OPCW, for his valuable work as Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group. The Secretariat is looking at ways it can strengthen cooperation with INTERPOL. Such cooperation can generate beneficial synergies, given our own extensive experience with assisting States Parties in national implementation on the one hand, and assistance and protection regimes on the other. Both are critical to any effort designed to enhance the capabilities of law enforcement agencies in the context of prevention and response.
19. Upgrading the OPCW Laboratory and Equipment Store to become a Centre for Chemistry and Technology will also be critical to achieving our long-term goal of preventing re-emergence.
20. To date, contributions and pledges totalling EUR 28.5 million have been received from 21 States Parties and the European Union to support the ChemTech Centre project. I sincerely thank all contributors for their generous support. This EUR 33.5 million project is scheduled for completion in 2022. The year 2020 will be dedicated to the design, the completion of all necessary permits, and tendering processes.
21. An additional EUR 5.0 million will be necessary by July 2020 in order to complete the project on time. This project will generate tangible benefits for all States Parties. I renew my appeal to States Parties from all geographical regions to financially support this project with pledges that suit their respective situations. A briefing on the status of the project will take place tomorrow.
22. The ChemTech Centre will also enable the OPCW to keep pace with developments in science and technology. The Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) has played a long-standing and critical role in this regard. I take this opportunity to welcome seven new members to the SAB, while expressing my sincere appreciation to members whose terms end this year. Notable amongst the departing members is the Chairperson, Mr Cheng Tang. Mr Tang's calm and composed manner and the depth of his knowledge will be missed. I thank him for his important role at the head of the SAB. He leaves the Board in the capable hands of the incoming Chairperson, Dr Christophe Curty, and Vice-Chairperson, Dr Zrinka Kovarik.
23. Today, another session of "Science for Diplomats" will take place during the lunch break. As you know, these briefings offer knowledge on chemistry relevant to the Convention and support informed decision making. Today's session will cover the definition of a toxic chemical and its scientific basis. I encourage all delegations to attend these informative events.
24. Since the Ninety-First Session of the Executive Council, 23 training courses, seminars, and workshops supporting more than 460 experts have been delivered through the International Cooperation and Assistance programme.

25. I thank all States Parties that have been supporting and contributing to these activities. Your support and commitment remain crucial to ensuring their success.
26. The annual report on the status of implementation of Article XI of the Convention was issued during the reporting period. It provides a comprehensive overview of the progress and the evolution in our approach based on lessons learned. Key areas of focus include capacity-building activities, needs assessment, and the evaluation of the impact of the programmes implemented. The report also touches upon the challenges to be addressed in the future to further enhance the implementation of Article XI.
27. In the context of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa, commonly known as the “Africa Programme”, the fourth phase is due to be completed by the end of this year. An overview of the core activities and results achieved during this phase is provided in a Note submitted for the Council’s information (EC-92/DG.13 C-24/DG.11, dated 9 September 2019).
28. Consultations regarding the fifth phase of the Africa Programme covering the period from 2020 to 2022 are under way. I intend to meet with the African Group soon to benefit from the views of its members and discuss the way forward.
29. On Sunday, 22 September, the OPCW welcomed the public for another annual edition of The Hague International Open Day. Open Day is our largest single outreach event. A new record was set this year, when over 1,150 individuals visited the Headquarters. This represents a 15% increase over last year. Within the first 24 hours, the OPCW’s Open Day social media campaign reached over 150,000 people from around the world. Open Day continues to be an important opportunity to improve the public’s understanding of what we do and the importance of our mission.

Mr Chairperson,

30. My report to the Ninety-Second Session is detailed. The full text of my statement will be circulated to delegations as an official document of this session.

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