

**SWEDEN****STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ANNIKA MARKOVIC
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF SWEDEN TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETY-SECOND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Thank you, Mr Chairperson,

Let me first of all join others in welcoming you, Ambassador Andrea Perugini, back to the Chair of the Executive Council (“the Council”). Sweden is committed to fully support the Council in its preparations for the Conference of the State Parties (“the Conference”) in November.

I would also like to thank Director-General Fernando Arias for his recent participation at the 13th CBRNe¹ protection symposium arranged by the Swedish Defence Research Agency in Malmö on 24-26 September. The symposium focused on recent developments and future challenges concerning protection against chemical, biological, nuclear, radiological, and explosive weapons. In his keynote address at the opening ceremony, the Director-General emphasised several vital aspects of the OPCW’s mission with respect to the challenges facing the global norm against the use of chemical weapons.

Sweden is fully aligned with the statement of the European Union, delivered by Ambassador Kaukoranta of Finland. In addition to what Ambassador Kaukoranta addressed, I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

The OPCW has Sweden’s continuous support in its important work regarding the Syrian chemical file. Our sincere trust in the professionalism and impartiality of the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) remains. Sweden recalls that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances, is unacceptable and a violation of international humanitarian law. Sweden remains determined that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic must be held accountable. This is reflected through our financial contributions to the OPCW Trust Fund for Syrian Mission. It is of utmost importance that the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), Fact Finding Mission (FFM), and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) are given the necessary prerequisites to perform the tasks assigned to them impartially and thoroughly. This requires full support from all State Parties, including full payments of mandatory annual contributions. Sweden welcomes the upcoming reports of the IIT and look forward to taking part of its findings.

¹ Chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive.



Toxic and potentially lethal chemicals that target the central nervous system (CNS), and their potential use in certain law enforcement, pose a serious challenge.

Sweden therefore supports the joint paper on aerosolised use of CNS-acting chemicals for law enforcement purposes, and co-sponsors the draft decision presented by Australia, Switzerland, and the United States of America.

Sweden also supports the Joint Proposal by Canada, the Netherlands, and the United States on adding two more families of chemicals under Schedule 1, as it is essential that the Convention remains updated on potential threats. Sweden is hopeful that an agreement can be reached on this issue during the Conference of the State Parties (“the Conference”) in November.

I would like to thank the Secretariat for its continued work to ensure qualified staff. The access to trained experts with extensive experience is vital in order for the Organisation to perform its tasks effectively. For Sweden, it also remains a priority to ensure integration of a gender perspective into the work of the OPCW, as well as gender balance on all levels of the Organisation. I welcome the exertions already made by the Director-General to safeguard female representation in the OPCW, while emphasising that further progress can still be made.

Furthermore, I would like to stress that Sweden appreciates and welcomes engagement from the civil society in our common goal to uphold the global norm against the use of chemical weapons. Transparency and openness are fundamental values of the OPCW and the participation of NGO representatives approved by the Organisation’s guidelines should be welcomed at the annual Conference.

In conclusion, I would request that this statement be considered an official document of the Ninety-Second Session of the Council and be placed on the public website.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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