



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

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**AUSTRALIA**

**STATEMENT BY MICHELLE MCKENDRY DEPUTY PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRALIA TO THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-SECOND  
SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Thank you Mr Chair. I would like to start by commending the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat for their ongoing efforts, activities and professionalism.

Most pressing for this Council session is transmission of the Draft Programme and Budget and its associated elements to the 2019 Conference of States Parties (hereinafter “the Conference). In Australia’s view, the budget is proportionate and appropriate, and will enable the OPCW to continue its vital work throughout 2020, across all pillars. We hope that this Council can agree by consensus to submit the draft programme and budget to the Conference.

Australia also commends Ambassadors Puja and Gomez for their ongoing dedication to the facilitation process on the joint position paper submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement and China. We look forward to continuing to work with them.

I would like to reaffirm Australia’s strong commitment, and Ambassador Neuhaus’s personal commitment, to working with the Technical Secretariat and States Parties on the issue of workforce planning. One element of this is the decision for consideration at this Council session on the re-hiring of inspectors, which Australia is co-sponsoring with Morocco. We encourage all Council members to support this decision, and to remain actively involved in the Secretariat’s workforce planning reform process.

Mr Chair, Australia appreciates the Technical Secretariat’s updates on its important work on Syria. Australia welcomes that the OPCW’s Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), established in accordance with the rules and procedures of the OPCW, is now operational, and working towards the release of its first report.

We commend also the thorough, impartial and independent work of the OPCW’s Fact-Finding Mission, and Declaration Assessment Team, on Syria.

Australia calls on all States Parties to strongly support the OPCW Director-General, and the Technical Secretariat, in carrying out these vitally important roles.



We note the Syrian Arab Republic's continuing engagement with the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team but remain concerned at the number of issues outstanding. We are also concerned that the Head of the IIT has still not been granted a visa to enter Syria. We call on the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with all parts of the OPCW, including the IIT.

It is in all our collective security interests to support the well-established international norms against any chemical weapons use, under any circumstances. We appreciate the Secretariat's work in helping to build and develop the capacity of States Parties to meet their obligations under the Convention.

As we start preparations for the Conference of States Parties, Australia would like to acknowledge the Russian Federation's modified technical change proposal. We appreciate the work by all technical change proposal sponsors to address this important issue. We look forward to circulation of the draft decisions in due course, which we hope will enable both proposals to be adopted by consensus in November.

On a less positive note, Australia is concerned that the General Committee has been unable to come to a consensus on the inclusion of civil society applicants for the 2019 Conference, in particular those who have been approved previously. We encourage members of the Committee to work constructively to resolve this issue.

Finally, Mr Chair, I am proud to announce that Australia, together with others, has co-sponsored a decision relating to the use of aerosolised central nervous system-acting chemicals for law enforcement purposes. I look forward to speaking more on this issue under the 'any other business' agenda item.

Thank you.

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