



Statement by H.E. Ms. Aiga Liepiņa

**Permanent representative of Latvia to the to the Organisation for the
Prohibition of Chemical Weapons**

**24th Session of the Conference of State Parties
National statement**

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Latvia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and would like to add a few remarks in its national capacity.

Mr. Chairperson,

The re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons in Syria, Malaysia, and the United Kingdom has been the most alarming development over the past five years. We condemn these atrocious acts in the strongest possible terms. The strong international reactions to each instance of chemical weapons use have demonstrated that the taboo against chemical weapons remains strong.

Latvia has been and remains a strong supporter of multilateralism. Furthermore, let me reiterate our full support for the Chemical Weapons

Convention as an essential pillar of the international counter proliferation architecture and the rules based international order on which we all rely.

The work of the OPCW is vital to these efforts. Over the past five years, the OPCW actively resisted the threats to the chemical weapons non-proliferation regime and reacted decisively to exceptional circumstances. In order to uphold capacity to help States Parties implement the Convention the Organisation needs full political and financial support of all States Parties. In this context my country condemns any attempts aimed at undermining the credibility and efficiency of the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat. We support the proposed Programme and Budget for 2020 and call on all States Parties to do exactly that.

Mr. Chairperson,

To stop the use of chemical weapons, we must end impunity for the perpetrators involved in chemical attacks. We are convinced that creation of Investigation and Identification Team is an important contribution in establishing accountability in this regard. We commend the ongoing work of the IIT in investigating the use of chemical weapons in Syria and we look forward to the first report.

States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention bear a particular responsibility in maintaining the Convention's responsiveness to new and emerging threats. Therefore, we welcome the update to the Schedule 1 of the Annex on Chemicals to the CWC and we look forward this to be adopted by consensus.

Furthermore, we must make sure that the OPCW can serve as a venue for raising awareness of the aerosolized use of central nervous system-acting chemicals by law enforcement. In this regard, Latvia supports the draft

decision presented at the 92nd Session of the Executive Council and its adoption next year.

To conclude,

In our common efforts towards a world free from chemical weapons it is vitally important to engage a wide array of relevant stakeholders, such as the private sector, civil society, academia. Therefore, Latvia welcomes the participation of the civil society at this session of the Conference and expresses our continuous support for the OPCW to remain true to its fundamental values – transparency and openness.

And last but not least, Latvia welcomes the Director-General's commitment to integrate the gender perspective in the OPCW and believe that it will strengthen the organization's overall capacity to advance its mandate to uphold the authority and integrity of the fundamental norms of chemical weapons prohibitions.

Thank you.