



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-Fourth Session
25 – 29 November 2019

C-24/NAT.3
26 November 2019
ENGLISH only

SWEDEN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ANNIKA MARKOVIC
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF SWEDEN TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE
OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chair,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by welcoming you, Ambassador Krassimir Kostov of Bulgaria, as chair of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. I can assure you of the full support of my delegation in this endeavour. Let me also thank the predecessor Ambassador Yun-young Lee of the Republic of Korea, as well as Ambassador Andrea Perguini of Italy for his tireless efforts in the preparations for this session as Chair of the Executive Council.

Furthermore, I seize this opportunity to thank you, Director-General Ambassador Fernando Arias, for your statement, which provides valuable guidance in our work at this Conference of the States Parties. It is due to the diligent commitment of the Director-General and the staff of the OPCW that the missions of this Organisation are carried out in such an exemplary manner. Sweden commends the hard work you do and reiterates its support for the Organisation as a whole.

Sweden fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and I wish to add a few remarks on behalf of my country.

Sweden reiterates its full support for the work on the chemical file in the Syrian Arab Republic. We note with apprehension the latest report of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), confirming that the Syrian Arab Republic remains in breach of its commitments as a States Party of the Convention. Furthermore, my country remains deeply concerned with the findings presented in the report published in March, where the OPCW Fact Finding Mission (FFM) concluded that a toxic chemical, likely molecular chlorine, was used as a weapon on 7 April 2018 in Douma. The FFM has repeatedly shown example of its ability to investigate alleged use of chemical weapons professionally and efficiently. It remains a priority for Sweden that the responsible perpetrators of chemical weapons use are identified and held accountable. We cannot accept impunity for these horrible crimes.



Sweden has taken note of the recent allegations of the use of white phosphorus as a chemical weapon in the Syrian Arab Republic. We have full confidence in the OPCW to continue monitoring the situation and that the Organisation remains prepared to act if deemed necessary.

Sweden commends the ongoing work of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) and we look forward to the issuing of the first report. We are convinced that it can contribute substantially in the efforts of establishing accountability for chemical weapons use.

To emphasise the significance of the continued work of the OPCW in the Syrian Arab Republic, Sweden has contributed with SEK two million for 2019 to the OPCW Trust Fund for Syria Missions.

The FFM, the DAT, and the IIT play equally important roles in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention, of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2118, and related decisions of the OPCW. The expertise, integrity and professionalism of these units should never be questioned by any States Party for political gain.

The recurring use of chemical weapons sends a clear signal: the OPCW's role within the disarmament and non-proliferation framework remains crucial. The OPCW deserves the full support of all States Parties to the Convention – politically, technically, and financially – in its efforts to uphold the global norm against chemical weapons. We urge all States Parties that are in arrears of payment of their annual contribution to pay their share in full and with no further delay. By not respecting their financial obligation, these States Parties are putting the fundamental purposes and tasks of the Organisation at risk.

On a positive note, the latest regular session of the Executive Council in October was in several ways a success. Sweden welcomes that the Council could agree to recommend the suggested program and budget of the OPCW for 2020 to this Conference. Sweden considers the proposed budget for 2020 balanced and justified. On behalf of my country, I would like to thank the Technical Secretariat as well as the co-facilitators for their dedicated work regarding next year's budget. Sweden urges all States Parties to support the proposed budget.

Sweden also notes with appreciation the efforts made by the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat on enhancing gender and geographical representation among staff. As Sweden has highlighted before, the advancement on disarmament and non-proliferation issues require the integration of gender perspectives. Sweden encourages the Secretariat to take note of the best practices of other international organisations and States Parties and we remain convinced that further progress can be also be made.

Sweden is convinced that the Conference during its Twenty-Fourth Session can reach an agreement regarding the issue of updating the Schedule 1 of the Annex on Chemicals to the Convention. Sweden reiterates its support for the Joint Proposal presented by the United States, Canada, and the Netherlands, and has taken note of the modified proposal presented by the Russian Federation. Sweden welcomes the mutual efforts made, as it is vital that the Annex on Chemicals remains up-to-date in order to maintain the Convention's efficiency and responsiveness. Sweden hopes to see the adoption of both proposals by consensus at this session of the Conference.

Lastly, Sweden welcomes the participation of representatives from the civil society at this Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference. NGOs play a key role in our common strive towards a world free from chemical weapons. It is vital that the OPCW remains true to its fundamental values of openness and transparency. Sweden therefore aligns itself with the joint statement concerning accreditation of NGOs for this session of the Conference presented by Ireland.

I thank you Mr Chair and ask that this statement be issued a public document of the Conference and published on the OPCW external website.

--- 0 ---