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GERMANY

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR RÜDIGER BOHN, DEPUTY FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER FOR DISARMAMENT AND ARMS CONTROL
OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AT THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairman,
Director-General,
Ministers,
Excellences,
Colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

Let me first congratulate you, Mr Chairman, on your election as Chairperson of this Session of the Conference of the States Parties and assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support. I would also like to pay tribute to Ambassador Andrea Perugini, who chaired the Executive Council session in preparation of this Conference. Likewise, I would like to congratulate the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, for his excellent leadership of the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat. Germany has full confidence in the professionalism and impartiality of the Director-General and Technical Secretariat. We reject/distance ourselves from any accusations to the contrary and urge all States Parties to cooperate instead of maligning an organisation that they themselves are a part of.

Speaking about the current challenges to the OPCW, we have to reflect on the recent OPCW's endeavours to bring forward Syria's chemical weapons file, to come to the completion of the Syrian declaration and to implement all OPCW steps ensuring that impunity is not an option.

Germany commends the Director-General for his recent briefing of the United Nations Security Council on Syria. It is imperative that the Security Council is well informed about all steps that the OPCW is taking in Syria's chemical weapons file. The goal of the OPCW to rid the world of chemical weapons forms an important part of the overarching goal of the United Nations to promote global peace and security.

Germany deeply deplores that the message to the Security Council could not be a positive one. As we have learned from the report of the Director-General to the Executive Council in October—after 22 rounds of consultations of the Declaration Assessment Team—the number of gaps and inconsistencies continues to be high. New concerns arose and very relevant



concerns remain unresolved. This is a completely unacceptable situation. Today, it must be the common and urgent endeavour of the OPCW States Parties to remind the Syrian Arab Republic of its responsibility to submit a complete and accurate declaration. We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to fully comply with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Germany welcomes the report of the Director-General on the progress in the implementation of the decision of the Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties in June last year to the Executive Council in October. We call on all States Parties to comply with this lawfully adopted decision and to contribute to its implementation, as it is their obligation under the Convention. Germany welcomes the establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team. We look forward to their first report being issued in due time.

The immediate tasks of this conference are two-fold. First we have to adopt the budget for 2020. The OPCW must be funded appropriately to fulfil its functions in the coming year. In October, the Executive Council has voted by an overwhelming majority to recommend the adoption of the Director-General's proposed budget for 2020. This budget proposal maintains the 2019 level of assessed contributions for all States Parties. We have studied it carefully and we are convinced that it is proportionate and justified. Germany calls upon all States Parties to agree to the proposed budget. We advocate for consensus on the budget proposal, because we are convinced that it is in the interest of all States Parties and of the OPCW to come to a common view on the budget for next year. Divergent views should be discussed, but they should not block consensus on this important decision.

Second, we have to decide about two sets of technical change proposals to update Schedule 1 of the Annex on Chemicals to the Chemical Weapons Convention. The issue of updating the schedule serves as a significant step of further strengthening the Chemical Weapons Convention. New and emerging threats have to be taken into account. The Executive Council supported the proposal from Canada, the Netherlands and the United States of America in January. Germany was one of the first explicit supporters. Germany can also support the Russian Federation's draft decision presented to this Conference of the States Parties, which does not include those chemical structures not found to meet the criteria for inclusion in Schedule 1. We have indicated back in February that we could support such a draft decision and now, we are happy that we can join consensus on the adoption of this Russian draft decision parallel to the joint proposal from Canada, the Netherlands and the United States of America. We encourage all States Parties to join consensus on the parallel adoption of both draft decisions.

Germany considers the parallel adoption of both draft decisions by consensus as a very significant, future-oriented step for the OPCW and for the cooperation of States Parties in this multilateral organisation.

With a view to future activities of the OPCW, Germany welcomes the agreement reached by the States Parties on the coordination of the facilitation processes. We thank the Executive Council Chairperson for his balanced proposal to revitalise the facilitation processes and we pay tribute to the co-facilitators Ambassador Puja of Indonesia and Ambassador Vasquez Gomez of El Salvador, especially as their tireless dedication paved the way to the consensus. We are aware that the process of facilitation remains driven by the States Parties. We will continue to play an active role in this process.

Germany is convinced that the OPCW has to make a major contribution to security in the field of chemical weapons, also in the future. The questions of non-proliferation and preventing of re-emergence will play a growing role in the future.

The development of the OPCW Laboratory to a Centre for Chemistry and Technology will be an important cornerstone in the fulfilling of future OPCW tasks. Germany supports the building of the new Centre for Chemistry and Technology. We note with satisfaction the broad support by States Parties across all regional groups, which makes the Centre for Chemistry and Technology a truly common future project.

Furthermore, Germany offers its support to the OPCW in other areas as well, e.g. regarding training and exercise opportunities. One example is another training course next week for OPCW inspectors that will start at the Bundeswehr Verification Centre. Let me assure you, that you can count on our cooperation in future as well.

Germany is deeply concerned to hear that some States Parties block the attendance of some civil society organisations to this Conference of the States Parties. This is especially disturbing, as the 2013 Review Conference agreed to open the Conference to civil society groups and agreed guidelines on their attendance. These guidelines are now ignored. We advocate that these guidelines must be respected, especially that those Non-Governmental-Organisations which have attended past conferences, must be accepted without further consideration.

Mr Chair, the use of chemical weapons is a violation of the Convention and a clear threat to international peace and security. Those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be identified and held accountable. It is in our common security interest. We all have the common responsibility to safeguard and support the Convention and her guardian, the OPCW.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties of the OPCW and published on the OPCW official webpage.

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