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UKRAINE

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR VSEVOLOD CHENTSOV
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF UKRAINE TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to join the previous speakers in extending congratulations upon your assumption of the Chairmanship of the Twenty-Fourth Conference of the States Parties. I would like to assure you that the delegation of Ukraine will support all your efforts to ensure a successful and meaningful outcome of our work during this week.

I would also like to thank the Director-General Ambassador Fernando Arias and the Technical Secretariat staff for their continued efforts to ensure progress in the implementation of the Convention and raising awareness about its important role in global multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation.

Ukraine aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union by the Ambassador of Finland. I take this opportunity to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Ukraine is a strong supporter of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which is widely recognised as the first multilateral instrument banning an entire class of weapons of mass destruction under strict and efficient international control and a full compliance mechanism.

Ukraine is gravely concerned by the use of chemical weapons or toxic chemicals as a weapon in the Syrian Arab Republic, and we remind the Syrian Government of the urgent need to comply fully with its commitments under the Convention. In light of the repeated violations of the Convention, it is both disappointing and a cause for alarm that no substantive progress has been made on the issue of the Syrian declarations. We acknowledge the continued dialogue between the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team and the Syrian authorities through the recent rounds of consultations and other activities. However, it is concerning that the gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies identified in Syria's initial declaration still remain after six years of Syria's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention. We urge the Syrian side to cooperate fully with the Declaration Assessment Team and immediately provide full disclosure in accordance with the Convention and the relevant Executive Council decisions.



Ukraine fully supports the professional, independent and impartial work of the Technical Secretariat's various teams: the Fact Finding Mission, the Declaration Assessment Team, and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT).

Namely, we express our support for the Investigation and Identification Team as it commences its work to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The IIT has identified nine priority incidents on which it intends to focus its work. This is an important step in ensuring accountability for those responsible for the use of chemical weapons. We look forward to the first report of the IIT.

Over the past years, the global ban on chemical weapons use has been broken several times—repeatedly in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia, and most recently in the United Kingdom. It is our joint responsibility as States Parties to the Convention to ensure that the relevant measures are imposed to identify those responsible.

That is why the June 2018 Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties adopted an important and necessary decision on the threat posed by chemical weapons use; it is now time for some States Parties to end their discussion as to whether the aforementioned decision is legitimate or not. Ukraine is fully convinced that the adoption of the decision was entirely legitimate and in accordance with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Rules of Procedure.

Therefore, we are extremely concerned that the Syrian Government has refused to issue a visa to IIT members.

The Syrian Arab Republic, as a State Party of the Chemical Weapons Convention, has an obligation to implement the decision of the Conference of the States Parties and provide the IIT with full access upon request. The IIT has been authorised by the States Parties to carry out its task and it should not be faced with any restrictions on doing so.

This session will consider two sets of technical change proposals to update Schedule 1 of the Annex on Chemicals to the Chemical Weapons Convention. This update can also serve as an important means of further strengthening the Convention. Ukraine has already indicated its support for the Joint Proposal submitted by Canada, the Netherlands, and the United States to add two new families of the chemicals to Schedule 1. We have also taken note of the modified proposal by the Russian Federation, which ensures its alignment with the Technical Secretariat's previous assessment and advice. This modification is a positive step and we are looking forward to the adoption of the final decision on this important matter.

The universality of the Convention is an important factor in enhancing its credibility and ensuring the irreversible character of chemical disarmament in the global dimension.

We strongly believe that in order to create the atmosphere of international trust, transparency, and mutual responsibility, we need the highest degree of participation in the Convention.

Since some States have not yet made their choice in favour of the Convention, we also believe that a shared goal is to use all possible political instruments to convince them to join the Convention in order to achieve its ultimate goal: to make the world free of chemical weapons.

My Government appeals to those countries that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention to do so without further delay.

We fully support the Director-General's efforts to introduce further efficiency and cost-saving measures, ensuring the best use of limited available resources.

The States Parties need to ensure that the OPCW is well supported and resourced to carry out its work programme. Ukraine believes that the 2020 draft Programme and Budget is reasonable and justified. Therefore, we urge all States Parties to support it.

Since both chemical industry and science play a growing role in modern society, the proper implementation of the Convention by State Parties at the national level is of critical importance for its viability. We are pleased to note that the implementation of basic obligations stemming from Article VII of the Convention is being actively pursued. We believe that the States Parties lacking capacities and capabilities will receive the appropriate assistance and technical support enabling them to fully implement the Convention. We would also like to call for a systematic approach to the full and effective implementation of Article XI of the Convention.

Ukraine is among those States that have a significant potential for cooperation in the framework of Articles X and XI of the Convention, taking into account its human and technical resources, as well as its high scientific and technological capacities.

The Secretariat of the National Authority of Ukraine permanently coordinates activities related to the implementation of the Convention. As a result of growing cooperation between the National Authority of Ukraine and the OPCW Technical Secretariat, Ukraine hosted several OPCW training courses on providing first medical assistance in case of emergencies and on analytical skill development for scientists. These workshops proved to be very fruitful and useful in the context of tasks and challenges that should be addressed in terms of fostering the regime of the Convention. Ukraine is ready to continue its collaboration with the OPCW in this direction.

Ukraine welcomes the draft decision presented by Australia, Switzerland, and the United States relating to use of aerosolised central nervous system-acting chemicals. We share the concerns expressed by numerous States Parties regarding the serious health and safety risks posed by such chemicals, and the possibility of their deliberate misuse. We look forward to the States Parties engaging constructively on this important topic, and Ukraine is pleased to co-sponsor this draft decision.

Ukraine also wishes to express its concern regarding the accreditation for NGOs to attend this Conference. The 2013 Review Conference agreed to open the Conference to civil society groups. This decision has been undermined by a small number of States Parties that have objected to the participation of certain NGOs in recent years. This is counterproductive, and contrary to the OPCW's values of openness and transparency.

Mr Chairperson,

At this Session of the Conference we are addressing the issues that demand our close attention. The delegation of Ukraine is ready to cooperate fully with the delegations of other States Parties and the OPCW Secretariat to do its utmost to work toward the implementation

of the Organisation's important task of the aimed at achieving the complete elimination of chemical weapons.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, and I would like to request that this statement be treated as an official document of the Conference.

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