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CZECH REPUBLIC

**STATEMENT BY H.E. KATEŘINA SEQUENSOVÁ
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson, Mr Director-General, distinguished delegates,

The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union. I would like to make a few remarks in our national capacity.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Kostov, on your election as the Chairperson of this session of the Conference of the States Parties. You have the full support of my delegation and we are confident that you will be able to steer our proceedings this week towards a successful outcome.

One of the critical tasks before us this week is to approve the budget of the OPCW for 2020. The Czech Republic supports the draft Programme and Budget as presented by the Director-General and recommended for approval by the Executive Council last month. The proposed spending level is justified and will allow the OPCW to continue its essential activities, including inspections, assistance programmes, and international cooperation. We hope that all States Parties will support the adoption of the proposed budget. We would also like to use this opportunity to reiterate the important obligation of all States Parties to pay their assessed contributions on time and in full.

The update to Schedule 1 of the Annex on Chemicals to the Convention is another crucial decision for this Conference. We welcome the fact that we currently have in front of us two draft decisions that we can support, one by Canada, the United States and the Netherlands, and one by the Russian Federation. We hope that both proposals will be adopted by consensus.

On the issue of Syria, the Czech Republic continues to be very concerned about the lack of progress on resolving the outstanding issues stemming from the failure of Syria to provide a complete declaration, as reported by the Declaration Assessment Team. This is a clear breach of one of the fundamental obligations of a State Party to the Convention and deserves our very close attention in the future as well. Last year at a Special Session, this Conference decided to create a mechanism that will identify those responsible for the use of chemical weapons. We welcome the progress reports of the Investigation and Identification Team and we look forward to its first substantive report in the coming months. We have full confidence in the work of the Technical Secretariat on the Syrian dossier.



The Czech Republic welcomes the developments in the past year on the issue of central nervous system-acting chemicals. We support the initiative by Australia, Switzerland, and the United States to submit a formal proposal to the policy-making organs of the OPCW with the aim to declare that the aerosolised use of these chemicals is inconsistent with law enforcement purposes as a “purpose not prohibited” under the Convention. We hope that this proposal will be adopted by consensus at the Conference of States Parties next year.

Allow me to turn now to an area to which the Czech Republic pays particular attention, namely to building the capacity of States Parties to prevent and respond to chemical threats and incidents. The Czech Republic has long been supporting OPCW activities under the umbrella of Article X of the Convention. We do this not only by regularly providing a voluntary financial contribution, but also by hosting training courses on our territory and sending instructors to other parts of the world to conduct trainings there. We believe that these courses are an effective way of building the capacity to respond to chemical threats and we are committed to continuing these activities in the future.

Staying on the issue of capacity building, the project to build the new Centre for Chemistry and Technology is crucial to ensure that the Technical Secretariat continues to have the capability to keep up with the latest developments in science and technology and to perform its core functions. It is therefore my pleasure to announce that the Government of the Czech Republic has recently approved a contribution of approximately 20,000 euros for this project.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

I would like to ask that this statement be made an official document of this session and be posted on the OPCW External Server and public website.

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