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**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ROSA BATORÉU  
AT THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION  
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson, Mr Director-General, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to start by joining others in congratulating Ambassador Krassimir Kostov of Bulgaria on his election as the Chairperson for this Session of the Conference of the States Parties. I am in no doubt that he will continue to guide our discussions towards a successful outcome.

I would also wish to commend the work of Ambassador Yun-young Lee of the Republic of Korea for his valuable contribution as Chairperson of the Twenty-Third Session of the Conference of the States Parties, and I would like to wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

Likewise, I seize this opportunity to recognise the outstanding professionalism, the independence, and the impartial work of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW under the able leadership and strategic vision of the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias.

Last but not least, let me also commend the Chairperson of the Executive Council, Ambassador Andrea Perugini of Italy, for his competent role in steering the preparatory work for this session.

Portugal fully endorses the statement made by Ambassador Mika-Markus Leinonen on behalf of the European Union. In addition, I would like to make the following comments in my national capacity.

Portugal fully supports the Director-General's proposed budget for 2020. The proposed budget is proportionated and justified. While respecting the principle of zero nominal growth in assessed contributions, it will allow the OPCW to respond adequately to the many pressing challenges this Organisation is faced with. The envisaged use of the 2017 cash surplus to sustain high priority investments is welcome, particularly as it also includes the enhancement of the laboratory capacity of States Parties as well as the establishment of a Major Capital Investment Fund to facilitate much needed capital replacements. Portugal also supports the proposal to move into biennial budgeting, which will streamline the overall budgetary process and will increase certainty and efficiency.

The use of chemical weapons is a violation of international law that cannot be tolerated under any circumstance. Fighting against such uses and related threats should neither be a topic for



hesitations nor divergences. It is because of this principle that Portugal gave its support to the decision entitled “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use”.

This decision gave the Technical Secretariat the framework needed to identify the perpetrators of chemical weapons crimes—not only in Syria, but also on the territory of any other State Party. The June 2018 decision represents a critical step for unequivocal compliance with the Convention, and must be respected and implemented in its entirety for the sake of all States Parties.

Portugal is looking forward to receiving the first substantive report of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), which we trust will bring a decisive contribution to the process of identifying those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. This will be an important step in the fight against impunity.

In the same vein, my delegation wishes to reiterate its support for the activities of the Technical Secretariat related to Syria, particularly the work of the Fact-Finding Mission and the Declaration Assessment Team, the impartial findings and assessments of which have been regularly brought to the attention of the States Parties in the most transparent manner. In this regard, Portugal recalls the concerns expressed by the European Union and shared by many delegations during this general debate.

Portugal supports the important and timely process initiated last year to amend the list of Schedule 1 chemicals. Hopefully, this long process will finally lead to the consensus-based adoption of the necessary technical changes. This is a welcome manifestation of our joint political responsibility and renewed commitment to the Convention.

I would like to conclude, Mr Chairperson, by voicing our appreciation for the revised approach to revitalise and bring new impetus to the facilitation framework. Portugal is grateful for the persistent efforts of the co-facilitators Ambassador Puja of Indonesia and Ambassador Vázquez Gómez of El Salvador, who have enabled us to come to a pragmatic solution. We look forward to the practical implementation of the coordination mechanism that has been agreed upon.

I would kindly request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Conference and be published on the OPCW website and extranet.

Thank you.