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GERMANY

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR CHRISTINE WEIL
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY TO
THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-THIRD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Director-General,
Distinguished Colleagues,

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union by the delegation of Croatia. I would like to thank Director-General Fernando Arias for his very comprehensive statement. We commend our Chairperson, H.E. Ambassador Andrea Perugini, for the intense preparation of the Ninety-Third Session of the Executive Council (hereinafter “the Council”).

This Session of the Council takes place in challenging times. The situation on the ground in the Syrian Arab Republic is alarming: the conflict has led to an intolerable humanitarian situation in the north of the Syrian Arab Republic. Further attacks are ongoing. We urge all parties to put an end to this unbearable situation. We urge all parties to stop fighting and to work, as their highest priority, on a solution at the negotiating table.

The OPCW is continuously working on the follow-up of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. The cooperation with the Syrian Arab Republic to complete the Syrian Declaration in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”) has not led to significant progress, in spite of twenty two rounds of consultations within the structured dialogue.

We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to finally fully declare its chemical weapons program in accordance with the Convention and to contribute actively to the elimination of all gaps and inconsistencies. It is the Syrian Arab Republic’s obligation under the Convention to cooperate with the OPCW and to provide a complete Declaration.

Germany is convinced that in these challenging times, we need more multilateral cooperation, to create more common ground, because we need common solutions.

Therefore, we have to respect the foundation of our cooperation, international law. The law of the treaties provides us the basic principle for a common understanding. This is also true for the Convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons.



In the Convention, we, the States Parties, have decided in which way decisions are taken in the OPCW, which bodies can take decisions, and what majorities are necessary. We, the States Parties to the Convention, have agreed on that in some detail in Article VIII of the Convention.

It is on that basis that in June 2018, we, the States Parties to the Convention, decided to create an attribution mechanism to establish the accountability for the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. This decision has been taken thoroughly in accordance with Article VIII of the Convention. We, the States Parties to the Convention, are obliged to contribute to the implementation of this decision. Now, it is unacceptable to claim a lack of consensus, because following the Convention, consensus is not a necessary condition for taking that decision. Germany strongly opposes the continuous attacks against this decision and the Organisation as a whole.

On the contrary, Germany demands compliance with international rules, which we ourselves have created. We urge all States Parties, to comply with the rules of the Convention and to implement the decisions already taken on that basis. Therefore, we urge the Syrian Arab Republic, as a Party to the Convention, to fulfil its obligations, to issue visas for the members of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), and to cooperate constructively.

We welcome the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) regarding the sharing of information with this body, as stated in the Report of the Director-General to this Council.

We welcome the clarifications given by Director-General Fernando Arias on 6 February 2020 concerning the statements made by former OPCW officials in the context of the FFM Douma report. We commend the Director-General for the proceeding he has chosen to bring clarity to this matter by initiating an independent investigation into possible breaches of confidentiality. The Director-General has shown the professionalism and leadership that was necessary to establish the facts in a comprehensive manner. We express our trust and our support to him and the entire OPCW. We renew our confidence in the correct establishment and content of the FFM Douma report. We expect that remedial measures will be taken to reduce the risk of future breaches of the OPCW's confidentiality regime.

Despite serious divergent views of States Parties, the OPCW has reason to look ahead with confidence. An illustrative example is the planned upgrade of the current OPCW Laboratory to a new Centre for Chemistry and Technology (hereinafter "ChemTechCentre"). It is a positive sign of broad "ownership" that 35 States Parties from all regional groups have already contributed to the new Centre. I am proud to inform the Council that Germany is ready to contribute EUR 1 million to the OPCW Trust Fund to support the new ChemTechCentre. Germany will continue to support this undertaking as the major future-oriented project of the OPCW.

Besides our political and financial support, Germany is currently preparing training opportunities and courses for the OPCW, in order to support capacity building and mission preparedness for OPCW missions.

Another sign of future-oriented, positive development in the OPCW is the outcome of the Facilitation on Organisational Issues, led by H.E. Ambassador Agustin Vasquez Gomez of El Salvador and H.E. Ambassador I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja of Indonesia. The five

meetings, held under their aegis, led to a constructive exchange on future necessities concerning organisational issues of the OPCW. Germany commends the co-facilitators for their able leadership in this process. We welcome the result, presented to this Executive Council. We will continue to cooperate constructively in future deliberations and possible common steps for the benefit of the OPCW.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

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