

**SWITZERLAND****STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HEINZ WALKER-NEDERKOORN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SWITZERLAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETY-THIRD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 13: ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr Chairperson,

Switzerland is convinced that addressing the issue of the aerosolised use of central nervous system (CNS)-acting chemicals for law enforcement purposes is necessary in order to safeguard the integrity of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”), and prevent the weakening of the global norm against the use of toxic chemicals for purposes prohibited under the Convention. Inaction on this important issue risks undermining the object and purpose of the Convention.

During the last Executive Council (“the Council”) meeting in October 2019, Australia, Switzerland, and the United States of America initiated a process with the aim of working towards two decisions to be considered in 2020 by the Council and the Conference of the States Parties. The decisions re-affirm our understanding of the application of the Convention, namely, that the aerosolised use of CNS-acting chemicals is inconsistent with law enforcement purposes as a “purpose not prohibited”.

We are encouraged by the fact that 29 countries have already joined as co-sponsors, and that many others have expressed their support. We call on all States Parties to join us in this endeavour. Since we started this process, we have provided several opportunities for States Parties to engage on this proposal and ask questions during side events, and we have conducted bilateral discussions with many interested delegations. At this stage, we hope to continue this dialogue and to hear from participants in this Council.

At the outset, I would like to address a few questions that have been raised in order to dispel any misconceptions about the draft decision.

The decision does not create new legal obligations for States Parties or impose any restrictions on legitimate uses of these chemicals. We are not seeking to list or control CNS-acting chemicals. Therefore, there will be no impact on the research, development, and trade of these chemicals for legitimate uses. There will be no additional verification implications. The burden on States Parties will be minimal, as the draft decision solely addresses a very specific scenario: the use of these chemicals in an aerosolised form in a law enforcement operation.



We are interested in hearing the views of all States Parties on this matter and in continuing this dialogue with a view to reaching an agreement by the end of this year.

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