

**PORTUGAL****STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ROSA BATORÉU
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PORTUGAL
AT THE NINETY-THIRD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

I would like to start by joining others in thanking you for the outstanding manner in which you have steered the preparatory work of this Executive Council (“the Council”). Likewise, I seize this opportunity to underscore Portugal’s recognition of the indisputable professionalism, independence, and impartial work of the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) of the OPCW under the able leadership of Director-General Fernando Arias.

Portugal fully endorses the statement made by Ambassador Dubravka Marković on behalf of the European Union at the beginning of this general debate. In addition, I would like to make the following comments in my national capacity.

The use of chemical weapons is a violation of international law that under no circumstances should be tolerated. Fighting against such uses and related threats must not be a topic for hesitations or divergences, and it was standing by this principle that Portugal gave its support to the decision entitled "Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use".

This decision put in place the framework required 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 is of critical importance for our collective, unequivocal compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention and must be respected and implemented in its entirety.

Portugal is looking forward to receiving the first report of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), which we trust will make 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 and in promoting accountability.

My delegation wishes to reiterate its support for all the activities of the Secretariat related to Syria, including the work of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), whose impartial findings and conclusions have been regularly brought to the attention of the States Parties in the most transparent and evidence-based manner. We expect that the Secretariat is effectively granted all the necessary conditions in order to be able to fulfill its mandate. Portugal recalls the serious concerns expressed early on by the European Union, which were shared by many delegations during this general debate.



The OPCW is an essential pillar of the international disarmament and security architecture, and Portugal remains strongly committed to supporting its mission to achieve a world free of chemical weapons and of the threat of their use.

In this regard, we believe that this Organisation must take into account all developments relevant to its work. The modification of the schedule I list of chemicals approved at the Conference of States Parties last November is an important decision towards that goal.

In the same vein, the OPCW's future Centre for Chemistry and Technology ("ChemTech Centre") is an important project that will provide significant collective benefits. We trust that the new ChemTech Centre will become a leader in research, analysis, training and capacity building that will reinvigorate the Organisation's capability to adapt to new developments in science and technology, which will enhance its verification, detection, and response activities. It will also allow for a considerable enhancement of the OPCW's international cooperation efforts.

Portugal is honored to be among the States Parties that have already contributed financially to the construction of new ChemTech Centre. We thank the Director-General and the Secretariat for the updates provided in this regard, and we look forward to receiving additional information in forthcoming briefings.

I would like to conclude Mr Chairperson, by joining the many voices of appreciation for the outstanding efforts of the co-facilitators Ambassador Puja of Indonesia and Ambassador Vázquez Gómez of El Salvador. Their work has enabled us to accomplish a broad convergence of understanding on a range of issues to be further implemented, alongside a set of topics for which more discussion is required. We certainly hope this may lead to tangible results.

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

Thank you.

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