

STATEMENT BY H.E. MARCIN CZEPELAK
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Mister Chairperson,
Director General,
Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset I would like to reassure Ambassador Augustin Vasques Gomez of El Salvador, the Executive Council Chairperson, of continuous engagement and support of this Delegation, having in mind also efforts of the EC Bureau. Aligning with the EU statement, I would like to make **two** broad points in my national capacity.

Firstly, Poland notes with growing concern that threats and challenges related to the use of chemical weapons, which occurred in recent weeks and months, clearly and repeatedly, continue to undermine key goals and objectives of the Convention and put the Organization – the guardian of the treaty – under enormous pressure. In the XXI century, 23 years after the CWC entered into force, dedicating enormous efforts to achieve its full implementation, including through the adoption of the 2018 CSP decision addressing the threat from chemical weapons use, and to the 2019 update (for the first time) of the CWC schedules – we still have to address fundamental questions regarding functioning and the future of the whole chemical disarmament and non-proliferation regime. But failure is not an option here. We need to do our utmost in order to ensure full compliance of each and every State Party with the Convention. We need to defend it and deter any further violation of the CWC.

Against this background, Poland is looking forward to the forthcoming Director-General report on the implementation by Syria of the July EC decision adopted in response to very worrisome conclusions of the first report of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) on the attribution of responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. We are also

looking forward to the publication of next IIT report. Obviously, the Conference of the States Parties has to consider, as appropriate, actions to be taken to address adequately implications stemming from the IIT conclusions.

The recent use of toxic chemical as a weapon against a Russian oppositionist is also a gravely disturbing development. Following the incident, the Polish MFA expressed deep concern that Alexei Navalny was poisoned by a military-grade nerve agent of the “Novichok” group, also used against Sergei Skripal in 2018. We strongly condemn this heinous attack and stress that those guilty of the attempted murder, with the use of prohibited chemical warfare agent, must be brought to justice. It is an absolute necessity to conduct a thorough investigation in this regard. We cannot stand idle when we face yet another breach of the CWC.

Secondly, it is our firm belief that the Organization has to continue its considerations and efforts to effectively adapt to dynamic, unforeseen international developments, which challenge the functioning of the whole multilateral system. This has been clearly underpinned this year specifically by COVID-19 pandemic. For this very reason Poland strongly supports presented **draft OPCW programme and budget for 2021**. It provides for an effective and balanced framework for all spectrum of the OPCW activities, critical to implementation of all pillars of the Convention in the months to come. Furthermore, we are looking forward to discussions regarding some flexibility **in organizing session and meetings by the OPCW in emergency situations**, similar to efforts undertaken by many other international organizations. Last but not least, we see a merit in moving forward, after many years of discussions initiated by Australia and Switzerland, our efforts related to **the prohibition under the CWC of the use of aerosolized Central Nervous System Acting Chemicals (CNSACs)** for law enforcement purposes. Poland supports the whole initiative and has decided recently to become one of co-sponsors of a related draft decision.

Mister Chairperson,

In conclusion, bearing in mind all these complex issues, I am honoured to inform this distinguished body that Poland, similarly to previous years, is going to submit to the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. As

you may recall, for years the resolution has been contributing to international peace and security. Its goal remains unchanged – to enhance the chemical non-proliferation regime based upon the Convention and its implementing body, the OPCW. I am deeply convinced that Member States will be able this year to build again a broad overall support for the resolution reflecting OPCW’s fundamental mission.

Thank you!