



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden

Statement by Sweden
Ninety-fifth Session of the Executive Council
of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
H.E. Ambassador Annika Markovic
Permanent Representative of Sweden to the OPCW

The Haag, 6-9 October 2020

Chairperson,

Sweden wishes to thank the Director-General Fernando Arias for his statement covering the comprehensive agenda before us. We would also like to thank the Director-General and his staff for their efforts and determination in ensuring the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) under the current difficult circumstances as well as for the preparatory work for this 95th Session of the Executive Council. Sweden is committed to fully support the Council in its preparations for the upcoming Conference of the State Parties.

Sweden is fully aligned with the statement of the European Union, delivered by Ambassador Gudrun Lingner of Germany. I would like to add a few remarks in our national capacity.

Chairperson,

The use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances is unacceptable and a serious breach of international law. We must ensure that impunity for the use of chemical weapons will not be tolerated. Those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.

It is, therefore, imperative to hold to account the perpetrators of chemical attacks in the Syrian Arab Republic - as concluded by the first report of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). The Syrian Arab Republic's recurrent violations of its obligations under the CWC continue to be a matter of great concern.

It is crucial that the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) are given the necessary prerequisites to perform the tasks assigned to them impartially and thoroughly. Sweden has contributed with funding for the IIT and we will continue to support its work on all the remaining investigations. Sweden has this year also contributed with voluntary funding to the OPCW Trust Fund for a Centre for Chemistry and Technology and to the Trust Fund for Syria Missions, amounting to a total of 2 400 000 Swedish kronor.

Chairperson,

Sweden condemns in the strongest terms the assassination attempt on Alexei Navalny who was poisoned with a military chemical nerve agent of the “Novichok” group, as confirmed by three OPCW-designated laboratories, among them the laboratory of the Swedish Defence Research Agency. We welcome Germany’s request for technical assistance from the OPCW Technical Secretariat. We fully trust the Technical Secretariat’s expertise, objectivity and impartiality.

Sweden calls on the Russian Federation’s authorities to conduct an impartial and thorough investigation with full transparency regarding the circumstances of this crime and bring those responsible to justice. We also urge the Russian Federation to cooperate fully the OPCW.

Chairperson,

It is a priority for Sweden to ensure integration of a gender perspective into the work of the OPCW. We commend the Director-General for his efforts to safeguard balanced gender representation in the OPCW, while emphasizing that further progress can still be made to ensure a more diverse Technical Secretariat. We look forward to our continued cooperation. Our ambition is to organize a workshop on gender issues together with the Technical Secretariat and UNIDIR before the Conference of the States Parties in November.

Chairperson,

I would like to, once again, express our appreciation for the engagement from the civil society in the work to uphold the global norm against the use of chemical weapons. The participation of NGO representatives approved by the Organization’s guidelines should be welcomed at the annual Conference of the State Parties.

Lastly, Chairperson, a few words about the toxic and potentially lethal chemicals that target the central nervous system (CNS), and their potential use in certain law enforcement as they pose a serious challenge. Sweden supports, as a co-sponsor, the draft decision on aerosolized use of CNS-acting chemicals for law enforcement purposes.

Thank you, Chairperson.