

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Vidmantas Purlys**  
**Permanent Representative of the Republic of Lithuania to the Organisation for**  
**the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons**  
**25th Session of the Conference of State Parties**

Mr. Chairperson,

Mr. Director-General,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lithuania aligns itself fully with the statement delivered by Ambassador Marjolijn van Deelen, Special Envoy for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, on behalf of the European Union and would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

We would like to extend our appreciation to Ambassador Krassimir Kostov of Bulgaria for his able leadership of 24<sup>th</sup> Conference of the State Parties. Let me extend the reassurances of our delegation's full support to the Ambassador Jose Antonio Zabalgaitia Trejo of Mexico, Chairperson of the 25th Session of the Conference of States Parties. I would also like to express our sincere appreciation for the leadership of Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias in these challenging times. Lithuania has full trust in the effective and impartial work of Technical Secretariat in implementing its functions under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

Lithuania condemns in the strongest possible terms the heinous attack on Alexei Navalny in Russia with a nerve agent from Novichok group, as has been confirmed by three independent specialised laboratories from Germany, France and Sweden, as well as by two OPCW designated laboratories following an OPCW Technical Assistance Visit. The use of a nerve agent constitutes a violation of the CWC. Lithuania firmly stands by the notion that any use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances is a violation of international law and completely unacceptable. We consider it of utmost importance to take determined action to investigate this situation and bring the perpetrators to justice.

This poisoning attack occurred in the territory of the Russian Federation; therefore, we urge the Russian authorities to address all questions related to this attack in a transparent way and without further delays. We call on Russia to cooperate fully with the OPCW ensuring an impartial international investigation of this incident.

We regret to note that the Syrian Arab Republic has not fulfilled its obligations following the Decision of the Executive Council (EC-94/DEC.2). This situation causes grave concern about the commitment of the Syrian Arab Republic to uphold the norms of the CWC, which it has decided to adhere when signing up to the Convention. Accordingly, further appropriate actions must be discussed and taken during the course of the CSP-25 and we stand ready to support them. We must take bold steps to ensure that there would be no impunity for the use of chemical weapons.

The repetitive use of chemical weapons and attempts to discredit investigations into these cases undermines our efforts and our mission for a world free of chemical weapons. We would like to reiterate our full support to the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) and its work. It is an important pillar of strong and effective OPCW. Equally, we continue to support tireless efforts of Technical Secretariat in promoting accountability.

Lithuania supports the valuable work of the Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons and remains strongly convinced that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be brought to justice.

Mr. Chairman,

Lithuania calls on all States Parties to support the adoption of the Director General's draft budget, which will enable the OPCW to continue its vital work throughout 2021.

It is essential that the CWC remains responsive to new and emerging threats. We welcome the initiative of Australia, Switzerland, and the US relating to the use of aerosolised central nervous system acting chemicals and are pleased to co-sponsor it. We look forward to the respective decision being adopted in the near future.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Director-General, Dear Colleagues,

The Convention requires States Parties to assign the highest priority to ensuring the safety of people and to protecting the environment during the implementation of its obligations when destroying the chemicals. I would like to reiterate that environmental risks are posed not only by destruction of chemical weapons today but also by remnants of previous wars, including the sea-dumped chemical weapons.

We ask that this statement be made an official document of the Conference and published on the external server and the public website of the OPCW.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.