

AMBAXXATA
TAR-REPUBBLIKA TA' MALTA



EMBASSY OF
THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA

THE HAGUE

**Statement of the Republic of Malta
Delivered by Ambassador H.E. Dr Mark A. Pace
At the 25th Session of the Conference of State Parties to the CWC
(The Hague, 30 November – 1 December 2020)**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Malta fully aligns with the EU statement delivered by Ambassador H.E. Marjolin van Deelen, Special Envoy for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation on behalf of the EU. I would like to now add a few comments in my national capacity.

My delegation would like to thank the Ambassador H.E. Krassimir Kostov of Bulgaria for his efforts as the Chair of the 24th Session of the Conference of States Parties (CSP) and pay tribute to his excellent contribution throughout the past year. We also thank the Chairperson of the Executive Council, Ambassador H.E. Agustin Vásquez Gómez of El Salvador, for his outstanding performance in guiding the preparatory work for this Conference. Our congratulations go out to Ambassador H.E. Jose Antonio Zabalgotia Trejo of Mexico for his election as the Chairperson of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of States Parties. Sir, you have our full support and we are confident that your professionalism and experience will help us to reach a successful conclusion of the 25th Session. May I also take this opportunity to extend my thanks to Director General, Ambassador H.E. Fernando Arias for his unwavering commitment to engaging with all stakeholders in the efforts to fulfil the Organisation's mandate.

Mr Chairperson,

You can count on my delegation for its steadfast commitment and full support throughout the proceedings of the Conference. The vital work carried out the Technical Secretariat with the aim of continuing the implementation of the CWC mandate during these trying times brought about by the pandemic is to be fully commended.

In this regard, Malta appreciates the need of the new ChemTech Centre as a means to ensure the organization is provided with the the technical set-up and necessary resources to continue with the process of the Convention's implementation. In commending the

contributions made by the State Parties towards bringing this project towards fruition, Malta is currently looking into making its own arrangements to support the initiative which will ensure the OPCW remains in position to meet the ever-increasing demands in fulfilling its objectives.

Similarly, my delegation wishes to express its endorsement of the initiative to consider digital modalities which could assist the Organisation in conveying its statutory sessions in force majeure situations.

Mr Chairperson,

This year's Conference is convening against an increasingly complex backdrop. The COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the importance of global cooperation to safeguard our societies and communities from threats that individual states cannot tackle successfully on their own. Pandemics are not the only threat that we face. Against this background, multilateralism and the framework that supports it assumes an increasingly prominent role in our national agenda.

In the spirit of steadfast cooperation, Malta fully supports the draft decision on Syria and expresses full confidence in the work of the IIT on this matter. Malta calls for the Syrian Arab Republic to engage in meaningful discussions with the OPCW and the other relevant actors.

Additionally, Malta notes with concern the recent use of the chemical nerve agent *Novichok*. Any use of a chemical nerve agent to poison individuals is considered a deployment of a chemical weapon and a violation of the Convention.

While maintaining the position that the use of chemical weapons by anyone – be it a State or non-State actor – anywhere, at any time and under any circumstance, is a direct violation of international law, Malta expresses its confidence in the work carried out to date.

Malta fully support the calls for cooperation in the investigation, while urging constructive engagement with the actors involved, and for the full facts to be established as a matter of priority and to ensure that the commitments taken by the State Parties to be fully upheld.

Mr Chairperson,

I also want to take this opportunity to reiterate my delegation's support for the work undertaken by the co-facilitators Ambassadors H.E. Mr Matthew Neuhaus of Australia and H.E. Ms Vásquez Gómez of Uruguay in continuing the efforts towards addressing organisational governance issues.

Lastly, I would like to conclude by conveying Malta's appreciation of the efforts being made by the Director General in striving towards ensuring equal gender representation within OPCW. Malta considers this as being an active contribution of underscoring the importance of gender perspectives within the context of non-proliferation and arms control. On a related note, we continue to underscore the need for increased geographical balance

and addressing under-representation or even non-representation of the individual State Parties within the Organisation.

I would kindly ask you, Mr Chairperson, to consider this statement as an official document and post it on the OPCW External Server and public website.