



## **THE NETHERLANDS**

STATEMENT BY

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE

ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

CSP-25, 30 November – 4 December 2020

In addition to the statement of the European Union, which the Netherlands fully supports, I would like to add the following comments in my national capacity. Last year when I addressed CSP 24, I voiced my concerns about the situation in Syria. And like then, Syria has yet to declare its' chemical weapon programme in full. Nevertheless, we have seen some important developments and we might be on our way to achieve a breakthrough. The Investigation and Identification Team presented its first report, with the second report to be released in the near future. Last July the Executive Council showed determination and set the Syrian regime a clear deadline as a last opportunity to comply with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and give openness about attacks with chemical weapons.

Syria has chosen not to grasp this last straw. As a consequence, a proposal to take appropriate action under the CWC has been circulated and will be decided upon

at the resumed session of the CSP. The Netherlands supports this draft decision and has joined as a co-sponsor.

Unfortunately, we have seen another instance recently, where chemical weapons were used.

The Netherlands condemns in the strongest possible terms the assassination attempt on Alexei Navalny that took place on Russian soil. I urge the Russian Federation to fully cooperate with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW. It is imperative that an impartial international investigation to identify the perpetrators is conducted as soon as possible.

In the first part of the Conference of States Parties, delegations will take action on the decision for the budget 2021. The Netherlands will support this decision and we urge all delegations to do so. The work of the Technical Secretariat cannot be suspended due to a lack of funding, as this will seriously impact chemical safety and security of all States Parties.

In this regard, we also draw the attention of States Parties to the mounting number of States Parties that are in arrears as to the payment of their assessed contributions. If this situation is not remedied, there is a real risk that the TS will not be able to perform its tasks to the fullest, because it simply cannot pay all the bills. That will obviously not be in the interest of States Parties.

Moreover, on top of this, due to inflation, the dogma of Zero Nominal Growth has resulted over the years in a continuous reduction of purchasing power for the TS. To adapt to this, the TS had to cut down expenses drastically over the years, something the Netherlands in itself commends, but we agree with the Director General that the rubber band has lost its stretch. Soon the TS will have to start

making difficult choices which tasks it can no longer perform. It is understood that this will seriously hamper the effectiveness of the important work of the TS. Therefore, we call on all States Parties to rethink the ZNG-notion.

The term of the current External Auditor is coming to an end. The Netherlands shows its gratitude to Sir Amyas Morse, Comptroller and Auditor General of the National Audit Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Three States Parties have announced they would like to put forward a candidate for the position of External Auditor. The Netherlands welcomes their interest and would favour the establishment of a panel of Permanent Representatives to assess each candidate and make a recommendation to the CSP.

The Netherlands reiterates its support, as a cosponsor, for the decision on Central Nervous System – acting Agents. We share the assessment of Switzerland, Australia and the United States of America, that CNS-aC's are dangerous, among others, for their indiscriminate effect and we will support further steps to achieve a full ban of the use of CNS-aC's.

The Netherlands also support, as a cosponsor, the proposal to adapt the Rules of Procedure of the ABAF.

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