



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

STATEMENT BY H.E. SANJA ŠTIGLIC, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
SLOVENIA TO THE OPCW

25th Session of the Conference of the States Parties to  
The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of  
Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction

Mr. Chairperson, Director-General Arias, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to first pay tribute to the chairpersons of the 24<sup>th</sup> Conference of States Parties and of the Executive Council for their tireless efforts in guiding States Parties' work in challenging times. I have full confidence that Jose Antonio Zabalgoitia Trejo of Mexico will take over the throttle of the Conference chair with equal competence and vigor.

In addition to the statement delivered on behalf of the EU, Slovenia would like to offer the following remarks:

We live in extraordinary times. Covid-19 has, in many ways, reshaped the world. It has taught us about things we can do without, and those we cannot. It has accelerated our progress towards digitalization and rearranged supply chains. But it has also shown us that we must continue to vigorously protect our fundamental values, at the core of which is respect for international law.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 has not stopped the use of chemicals as weapons. Most recently, we were appalled by the use of a chemical nerve agent against Alexei Navalni. We join the calls on the Russian Federation to disclose the circumstances of this crime, and to fully cooperate with the international community in ensuring an impartial investigation and in bringing those responsible to justice.

The OPCW, and in particular its Fact-Finding Mission and the Investigation and Identification Team, have played an invaluable role in determining the circumstances of the use of chemical weapons in the conflict in Syria. We welcome their impartial reports, just as we deplore the sad news they bore.

Slovenia unequivocally condemns all use of chemical weapons by anyone anywhere. Impunity for such actions must not be allowed. For this reason, we firmly support the proposed decision

concerning the possession and use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic, and call on all other States Parties to do the same.

Director-General Fernando Arias and his highly professional team have ensured that this organization has continued to deliver on its mandate even under the challenging circumstances of Covid-19, and I warmly thank them for it.

We are pleased to note that OPCW has managed, in a short time, to significantly modernize its working methods and technical capabilities. We look forward to further improvements in the coming year which should allow us, collectively, to be better prepared to carry on with the task of ensuring the implementation of the Convention in any future emergency circumstances. In this vein, we also welcome the so-called business continuity initiative and look forward to creative solutions stemming from the ongoing consultation process.

Slovenia furthermore fully supports the initiative regarding aerosolized use of central nervous system acting chemicals (CNSAC) for law enforcement purposes. Used as incapacitants, these chemicals can cause death, temporary incapacitation or permanent harm during or after exposure. It is therefore our clear understanding that such use would be inconsistent with law enforcement purposes as a "purpose not prohibited" under the Convention, and should be prevented. We hope that States Parties will lend their support to the initiative to confirm such an understanding.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OPCW is our organization. We as States Parties have created it to help protect us from chemical weapons that have caused so much pain and suffering throughout history. We must empower it to do its job! I am, of course, referring to supporting the proposed programme and budget for 2021, but also to the need for full cooperation with the Technical Secretariat in its investigations, and for trusting the results of the inquiries of their highly qualified and impartial staff. We further hope that work on the new ChemTech Centre, which we were pleased to support with a contribution, will start soon.

Finally, I wish to assure Director-General Arias, as well as States Parties, of Slovenia's full cooperation and unwavering support to the OPCW in its important task of eliminating the threat of chemical weapons.

Thank you.