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FRANCE

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR LUIS VASSY
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished Ambassadors,

France aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. Allow me to add the following elements in a national capacity.

The criminal act perpetrated against Alexei Navalny on 20 August, on the territory of the Russian Federation, is deeply alarming and occurred within the context of the equally alarming re-emergence of use of chemical weapons. Twenty-seven years ago, all of us here agreed, for the sake of all mankind, to exclude completely the possibility of their use.

It is imperative that the truth be brought to light without delay, and that those responsible for this act be brought to justice.

Based on its own analyses, France shares the conclusions of several of its European partners on the facts regarding the poisoning using a nerve agent, Novichok. France condemns in the strongest terms the appalling and irresponsible use of such an agent. The use of chemical weapons, anywhere, anytime, by anyone, and under any circumstances is unacceptable and contravenes the international norms against the use of these weapons.

As the President of the Republic indicated in his address to the United Nations General Assembly: “We will not tolerate chemical weapons being used in Europe, Russia or Syria. For the sake of our collective security, I repeat once more to Russia the need for full light to be shed on the murder attempt on a political opposition figure using a nerve agent, Novichok. This clarification must be swift and unfailing ...”.

You are aware of my country’s commitment to the fight against impunity for the use of chemical weapons.

The Syrian chemical dossier that is on the agenda of this Executive Council (“the Council”), as it has been for the last few years, is an acknowledgment of the threat that the re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons poses to our common security.



We must not let this situation compromise the full application of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”). On the contrary, we must remain united, defend it tirelessly, and prevent any further use of these weapons. By adopting the decision put forward by my delegation on behalf of 40 States Parties, the Council at its Ninety-Fourth Session in July took action under the mandate given to it by the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties (“the Conference”) of June 2018.

The decision calls on the Syrian regime to comply with its obligations within a reasonable deadline, by setting clear and verifiable parameters. We call on Syria to cooperate with the Technical Secretariat and to redress the situation within the reasonable deadline that we established.

As is set out in the Council decision, the Conference has the authority to ensure compliance with the Convention and to take necessary measures to guarantee this. We hope that the Conference, which has been convened to meet in November, will be an opportunity for a constructive and sincere exchange among the States Parties.

We cannot emphasise it enough: the OPCW is a fundamental pillar of our collective security. In view of the alarming developments that we face today, it is all the more essential to ensure that the Organisation has the budgetary resources necessary to implement its mandate, in particular to prevent the re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons.

This is why we have a duty to support the Organisation’s efforts, by allowing the Conference to examine the Programme and Budget for 2021, so that the OPCW will be in a position to carry out the missions we have entrusted to it. France, therefore, supports the Programme and Budget for 2021 as presented by the Director-General on 3 July.

I would ask that this statement be considered as an official document of this session of the Council and that it be published on the internal and external servers of the OPCW.

Thank you.

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