UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF
GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
UNDER AGENDA SUBITEM 6(C) ON THE ELIMINATION OF THE SYRIAN
CHEMICAL WEAPONS PROGRAMME

Mr Chairperson,

It is deeply regrettable that Syria’s only response to date to the July decision addressing its
repeated use of chemical weapons has been to pursue a misguided public relations campaign.
A campaign that denies the Syrian regime’s repeated use of chemical weapons; accuses anyone
that challenges them of being part of a western plot; and portrays the OPCW and the
United Nations as biased, incompetent and lacking integrity.

The reality is very different. For seven long years Syria has failed to provide a credible
declaration on its chemical weapons programme. The scale and scope of its programme is
slowly been revealed by the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), as a result of persistent
investigation, involving the collection of hundreds of samples. The latest monthly report by the
Director-General confirms Syria has made yet more amendments to its declaration. No other
State has ever failed so comprehensively to get the basics right. Hundreds of tonnes of chemical
weapons agent and precursors, and thousands of munitions remain unaccounted for.

Since Syria acceded to the Convention the regime has been found by the United Nations’ Joint
Investigative Mechanism and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) to have used
chemical weapons against its own people on seven separate occasions. Those findings and the
evidential base supporting them have been presented in meticulous detail for us all to see.

The Syrian regime’s response and that of its Russian backers has been to double-down on
attacking on the Technical Secretariat. Syria would be better advised to focus on meeting the
deadline to respond to the decision taken by this Council in July.

Should Syria choose a different path, it will be for the Conference of the States Parties to decide
on next steps.

The Syrian regime’s repeated use of chemical weapons has provided a backdrop for others to
also break the taboo, and we have seen chemical weapons used in Malaysia, Iraq, my own
country, and most recently in Russia.

Failing to address Syria’s chemical weapons use risks undoing the hard-won international
agreement to put an end to the development and use of these appalling weapons.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.