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**UKRAINE**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR VSEVOLOD CHENTSOV  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF UKRAINE TO THE OPCW  
AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION  
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to warmly congratulate H.E. Ambassador Jose Antonio Zabalgoitia Trejo of Mexico for his election as the Chairperson of the Conference of the States Parties. Let me also pay tribute to H.E. Ambassador Krassimir Kostov of Bulgaria, Chairperson of the Twenty-Fourth Conference of the States Parties, and Ambassador Agustín Vásquez Gómez of El Salvador, Chairperson of the Executive Council, for their tireless efforts and outstanding performance in fulfilling their duties.

I would like to thank the Director-General of the OPCW, H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias, and the Technical Secretariat staff for their continued efforts in ensuring progress in the implementation of the Convention and rising awareness about its important role in global multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation in spite of challenges caused by the outbreak of COVID-19.

Ukraine aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I take this opportunity to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Ukraine condemns in the strongest possible terms the recent attack on Mr Alexei Navalny, who was poisoned in Russia by a military chemical nerve agent of the novichok group. The use of novichok has been confirmed by German, French, and Swedish specialised laboratories independently, as well as by two OPCW designated laboratories.

We reiterate that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone, and under any circumstances is a violation of international law, and we urge Russia to investigate and disclose the circumstances of this crime in full transparency and with close cooperation with the OPCW, and bring those responsible to justice.

Ukraine strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons or toxic chemicals as a weapon by the Syrian Arab Republic as concluded by the first report of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) on 8 April 2020. Following the report, on 9 July 2020, the Executive Council took an important decision, setting a timeframe and clear actions that the Syrian Arab Republic was required to take within 90 days to redress the situation and to return to full compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention.



The Director-General of the OPCW in his report to the Executive Council on 14 October 2020 informed that the Syrian Arab Republic has not declared to the Technical Secretariat any facilities where the chemical weapons used in the 24, 25, and 30 March 2017 attacks were developed, produced, stockpiled, and operationally stored for delivery, nor any chemical weapons it currently possesses.

In accordance with Article XII of the Convention, the Conference of the States Parties shall now take necessary action. Therefore, Ukraine considers the draft decision “Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic” as an appropriate response by the Conference of the States Parties and urges States Parties to support its adoption.

Ukraine fully supports the professional, independent, and impartial work of the Technical Secretariat’s various teams—the Fact-Finding Mission, the Declaration Assessment Team, and the IIT.

Namely, we express our support for the IIT as it commences its work to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The IIT has identified nine priority incidents on which it intends to focus its work. This is an important step in ensuring accountability for those responsible for the use of chemical weapons. Therefore, we look forward to the next report of the IIT.

The universality of the Convention is an important factor to enhance its credibility and ensure irreversible character of chemical disarmament in a global dimension.

We strongly believe that in order to create the atmosphere of international trust, transparency, and mutual responsibility, we need the highest degree of participation in the Convention.

Since some States have not yet made their choice in favour of the Convention, we also believe that it is a common task to use all possible political instruments to convince them to join the Convention in order to achieve its ultimate goal—to make the world free of chemical weapons.

Ukraine appeals to those countries, which have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention, to do so without further delay.

We fully support the Director-General’s efforts in introducing further efficiency and cost-saving measures, ensuring the best use of limited available resources.

The States Parties need to ensure that the OPCW is well supported and resourced to carry out its work programme. Ukraine believes that the 2021 Draft Programme and Budget is reasonable and justified. The Budget will enable the OPCW to continue its vital work throughout 2021, including cooperation and assistance projects. Therefore, we urge all States Parties to support it as recommended by the Executive Council.

Ukraine welcomes the draft decision presented by Australia, Switzerland, and the United States relating to use of aerosolised central nervous system-acting chemicals. We share the concerns expressed by numerous States Parties regarding the serious health and safety risks posed by such chemicals, and the possibility of their deliberate misuse. We look forward to the States Parties engaging constructively on this important topic, and Ukraine is pleased to co-sponsor this draft decision.

At this session of the Conference, we are addressing the issues that demand our close attention. The delegation of Ukraine is ready to cooperate fully with the delegations of other States Parties and the OPCW Secretariat to do its utmost to work for the implementation of the important task of the Organisation aimed at the complete elimination of chemical weapons.

Thank you Mr Chairperson, and I would like to request that this statement be treated as an official document of the Conference.

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