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MALTA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DR MARK ANTHONY PACE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA
TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Malta fully aligns itself with the EU statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Marjolijn van Deelen, Special Envoy for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation on behalf of the EU. I would like to now add a few comments in my national capacity.

My delegation would like to thank H.E. Ambassador Krassimir Kostov of Bulgaria for his efforts as the Chairperson of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties (“the Conference”) and pay tribute to his excellent contribution throughout the past year. We also thank the Chairperson of the Executive Council, H.E. Ambassador Agustin Vásquez Gómez of El Salvador, for his outstanding performance in guiding the preparatory work for this Conference. Our congratulations go out to H.E. Ambassador José Antonio Zabalgaitia Trejo of Mexico for his election as the Chairperson of the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. Sir, you have our full support and we are confident that your professionalism and experience will help us to reach a successful conclusion of the Twenty-Fifth Session. May I also take this opportunity to extend my thanks to Director-General, H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias, for his unwavering commitment to engaging with all stakeholders in the efforts to fulfil the Organisation’s mandate.

You can count on my delegation for its steadfast commitment and full support throughout the proceedings of the Conference. The vital work carried out by the Technical Secretariat with the aim of continuing the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention’s mandate during these trying times brought about by the pandemic is to be fully commended.

In this regard, Malta appreciates the need of the new Centre for Chemistry and Technology as a means to ensure the Organisation is provided with the technical set-up and necessary resources to continue with the process of the Convention’s implementation. In commending the contributions made by the States Parties towards bringing this project towards fruition, Malta is currently looking into making its own arrangements to support the initiative which will ensure the OPCW remains in a position to meet the ever-increasing demands in fulfilling its objectives.



Similarly, my delegation wishes to express its endorsement of the initiative to consider digital modalities which could assist the Organisation in conveying its statutory sessions in force majeure situations.

This year's Conference is convening against an increasingly complex backdrop. The COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the importance of global cooperation to safeguard our societies and communities from threats that individual States cannot tackle successfully on their own. Pandemics are not the only threat that we face. Against this background, multilateralism and the framework that supports it assumes an increasingly prominent role in our national agenda.

In the spirit of steadfast cooperation, Malta fully supports the draft decision on Syria and expresses full confidence in the work of the Investigation and Identification Team on this matter. Malta calls for the Syrian Arab Republic to engage in meaningful discussions with the OPCW and the other relevant actors.

Additionally, Malta notes with concern the recent use of the chemical nerve agent novichok. Any use of a chemical nerve agent to poison individuals is considered a deployment of a chemical weapon and a violation of the Convention.

While maintaining the position that the use of chemical weapons by anyone—be it a State or non-State actor—anywhere, at any time, and under any circumstances, is a direct violation of international law, Malta expresses its confidence in the work carried out to date.

Malta fully support the calls for cooperation in investigation, while urging constructive engagement with the actors involved, and for the full facts to be established as a matter of priority, and to ensure that the commitments made by the States Parties are fully upheld.

I also want to take this opportunity to reiterate my delegation's support for the work undertaken by the co-facilitators H.E. Ambassador Matthew Neuhaus of Australia and H.E. Ambassador Laura Dupuy Lasserre of Uruguay in continuing the efforts towards addressing organisational governance issues.

Lastly, I would like to conclude by conveying Malta's appreciation of the efforts being made by the Director-General in striving towards ensuring equal gender representation within the OPCW. Malta considers this as being an active contribution to underscoring the importance of gender perspectives within the context of non-proliferation and arms control. On a related note, we continue to underscore the need for increased geographical balance and addressing under-representation or even non-representation of individual States Parties within the Organisation.

I would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.