



**INTERVENTION UNDER AGENDA ITEM 9(d) BY
CHARGÉ D’AFFAIRES KERRY GILLAM-O’CONNOR,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

20 – 22 APRIL 2021

Mr Chairperson,

In addition to the Joint Statement of the cosponsors of the draft Decision “Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic”, which Aotearoa New Zealand associates itself with, New Zealand makes the following statement in its national capacity.

We remain gravely concerned by the repeated, confirmed use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic. To date, there have been eight cases of confirmed chemical weapons use by Syria, and Syria’s actions represent a serious violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We are equally concerned that, eight years after Syria joined the Convention and after 23 rounds of consultations with the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team, Syria’s initial declaration still cannot be considered accurate and complete, as there are significant gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies that remain unresolved.

The Executive Council decision EC-94/DEC.2 dated 9 July 2020 provided Syria with a clear pathway back to compliance with the Convention. In the absence of a meaningful response from Syria to that Executive Council decision, it is now time for the Conference of the States Parties to act.

For these reasons, New Zealand has co-sponsored the draft decision before us. As others have said, this is a measured response to the current situation.

We have been patient and no effort has been spared in our collective goal to bring Syria into compliance with the Convention. This latest step is consistent with that goal. We call on all States Parties to uphold the Convention and support the draft decision.

Thank you Mr Chairperson.