

**JOINT STATEMENT
BY THE MEMBER STATES OF THE COLLECTIVE SECURITY
TREATY ORGANIZATION AT THE SECOND PART
OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE
OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CWC (CSP-25)**

We hereby present the Statement by the Member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which are Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (hereafter referred to as “the Convention”).

Being firmly committed to building a world free of chemical weapons and creating an environment that would prevent the re-emergence of these deadly weapons of mass destruction, the Member States of the CSTO are alarmed by the current situation in the OPCW, particularly by the processes that undermine the effective and well-coordinated work of the Organization.

We cannot agree with the draft decision submitted for consideration to the CSP-25 to declare the Syrian Arab Republic responsible for violating the Convention and suspend its rights and privileges under the Convention. We believe that this decision only seeks to legitimize the controversial and tendentious conclusions of the report prepared by the Investigation and Identification Team – an illegitimate entity that was established contrary to the Convention in order to exert political pressure on certain States Parties. For the first time in its history, the OPCW has embarked on a strategy aimed at declaring a full member of the Organization – without any foundation or verified facts – responsible for non-compliance with its obligations under the Convention and imposing sanctions against it.

At the same time, it is bewildering that the Secretariat has ignored a recent use in a regional conflict of a dangerous chemical agent whose impact on

people and environment is comparable to that of a chemical weapon. The Secretariat has an obligation to respond to such reports from the States Parties and take immediate steps in accordance with the Convention's norms.

Such dangerous precedents will undoubtedly have a negative impact on the Organization, affecting its reputation as a Nobel Peace Prize laureate and a respected specialized international entity whose work is focused on chemical disarmament and non-proliferation. They will also make the Convention less attractive for those countries that still have not joined this international treaty.

We believe that the use of the OPCW platform for disseminating baseless – substantiated by no real facts whatsoever – and provocative statements suggesting that certain States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention possess, covertly stockpile and use chemical weapons, including against individual citizens, poses a serious problem. It appears that these steps are aimed at promoting one's own far-reaching geopolitical interests, questioning the credibility of the Organization.

We are convinced of the inadmissibility of using the language of ultimatums and groundless allegations while ignoring the Convention's norms and procedures that prescribe cooperation and all possible efforts to resolve any issues concerning compliance with its provisions through consultations and dialogue.

We are gravely concerned about initiatives that go beyond the scope of the Convention and require amendments in accordance with Article XV for their implementation. These include the proposal to adopt, with no prior substantial discussion, a decision on some kind of "understanding" on the non-use of aerosolized central nervous system acting chemicals for law enforcement purposes. We believe that such steps lead to the erosion of the Convention's foundations and its transformation into an amorphous mechanism allowing for loose interpretation of its provisions depending on the circumstances and preferences of particular States Parties.

The Convention contains no provisions banning the use of such substances, and many of them are widely used in medicine, pharmaceuticals industry, agriculture and other sectors for purposes not prohibited by the Convention. We suggest that definitions and a list of relevant substances should be first agreed on an expert level before we could go back to considering this issue.

We are convinced of the need to resolutely and unconditionally strive for achieving a common unifying goal of strengthening the regime of chemical disarmament and non-proliferation of chemical weapons. We need to exert maximum efforts to preserve the integrity of the Convention and prevent further destructive politicization of the OPCW work. That is the only way we can move forward and strengthen the Convention, which is one of the fundamental treaties of the international security and disarmament architecture.