

STATEMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS
BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PAUL VAN DEN IJSSEL
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS
TO THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS
AT THE 25 SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES
(The Hague, 20-22 April 2021)

Agenda item 9 (d) – Addressing the threat from chemical weapons use

Mr. Chairperson

The Netherlands adds its voice to those member states that call for further action to urge Syria to comply fully with the Chemical Weapons Convention. Almost 8 years now, Syria has had every opportunity to fulfill its obligations under the Convention, as well as under Security Council resolution 2118.

However, and in spite of mounting evidence that Syria had not been fully transparent and had not completely given up its chemical weapon programme, it persevered in denying any use or even possession of chemical weapons.

Mr. Chairperson,

The case against Syria is clear. The Investigation and Identification Team of the OPCW has concluded, twice already, that there are reasonable grounds to believe that Syria is responsible for attacks with chemical weapons. Moreover the Joint Investigative Mechanism, set up and mandated by the Security Council, established Syria's responsibility in four separate attacks with chemical weapons, before it ceased to exist.

Mr Chairperson

We urge member states to show dedication to uphold the universal norm against the use of chemical weapons - a norm underlined many times, by so many members states. We think it is now time to act.

And I understood Mr President from your announcement that in the absence of consensus we will have a roll call vote on the draft decision in conformity with rules 69 and 72 of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference 24 hours from now.

Let me conclude

This is not politics: the decision doesn't constitute any irreversible punitive measures against Syria. This is a further step to finally end chemical weapon attacks in Syria. Adopting this decision will give a clear and unmistakable sign that member states of the OPCW acknowledge their responsibility to defend the principle norm of the CWC and live up to their promise upon joining the CWC.