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LUXEMBOURG

**STATEMENT BY MR JEAN-MARC HOSCHEIT
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG
TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished Ambassadors,

Luxembourg fully aligns itself with the statement by the European Union. I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

On behalf of my delegation, I should like to express our pleasure at seeing you as Chair of this Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties (“the Conference”), and to assure you of our full support. I should also like to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Krassimir Kostov, as well as the Chairperson of the Executive Council (“the Council”), Ambassador Agustín Vásquez Gómez, for the professional manner in which they led the work in preparation for this session.

I should also like to take this opportunity to thank once again the Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Fernando Arias González, and the staff of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW (“the Secretariat”), who this year had to face numerous challenges—mostly of a technical nature—caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. In this connection, I wish to thank you for making the practical arrangements in compliance with the COVID-19 safety precautions, which have allowed the States Parties to follow the various sessions of the Council and this Conference remotely.

To accomplish its mission and to face the current challenges, such as the coronavirus crisis, which has greatly affected the Secretariat’s work, the Secretariat must have predictable funding and adequate human resources. The Draft Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2021 proposed by the Director-General is balanced and justified, and we call on all of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) to approve it.

After the events of Salisbury and Amesbury in 2018, during which five persons were poisoned, including one fatally, a chemical nerve agent of the novichok family was similarly used this year to poison Mr Alexei Navalny in the Russian Federation. Thankfully, after receiving the necessary care, Mr Navalny survived this criminal act.



Luxembourg is deeply concerned by this assassination attempt and roundly condemns the use of this nerve agent which, moreover, was detected by three independent specialised laboratories in Germany, France, and Sweden, as well as confirmed by two OPCW designated laboratories following a request for technical assistance. My country reiterates its strong belief that any use of chemical weapons anywhere, anytime, by anyone, and under any circumstances cannot, in any case, be tolerated. Those who use these deadly toxic agents, in flagrant violation of the Convention, must be held to account. Accordingly, we call on the Government of the Russian Federation to cooperate fully—and with full transparency—with the Secretariat and to conduct an inquiry that will allow those responsible for this criminal act to be brought to justice.

Again this year, the international community was witness to the Syrian Arab Republic's repeated violation of its obligations as a State Party to the Convention. We continue to support the important work carried out by the various teams of the OPCW, and in particular the Investigation and Identification Team which published its first report, which concluded that the perpetrators who used chemical weapons on three occasions during the attacks in Ltamenah in March 2017 were identified as individuals belonging to the Syrian Air Force.

Following the publication of that report, the Council adopted an important decision in July, calling on the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate fully with the Secretariat within 90 days. Regrettably, that deadline expired in October, with no action taken on the part of the Syrian Arab Republic. Consequently, it will be up to the Conference to consider new appropriate measures.

Luxembourg remains concerned by the threat posed by the use of aerosolised central nervous system-acting chemicals for law enforcement purposes. The aerosolisation of these chemicals risks causing grave damage in a law enforcement setting. It is therefore important that we take action on this matter within our Organisation. My country is a committed member of the important group of countries that launched the process that is aimed at dealing with this issue in the coming year.

Regarding the establishment of the new OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology and its Equipment Store, my country is proud to be among the 45 States Parties (and the European Union) that have provided the necessary funding, through voluntary contributions, to realise this important project. Among other things, it will strengthen the chemical analysis and knowledge management capabilities of our Organisation. My country welcomes the Director-General's announcement regarding the forthcoming selection of the builder and the start of construction, which is planned for next summer.

I would be grateful if this statement could be published on the external server and public website of the Organisation as an official document of this Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference.

Thank you.

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