



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-Fifth Session
30 November – 1 December 2020 (Part I)

C-25/NAT.52
30 November 2020
ENGLISH only

LITHUANIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR VIDMANTAS PURLYS
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
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,

Lithuania aligns itself fully with the statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Marjolijn van Deelen, Special Envoy for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, on behalf of the European Union and would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

We would like to extend our appreciation to H.E. Ambassador Krassimir Kostov of Bulgaria for his able leadership of the Twenty-Fourth Conference of the States Parties. Let me extend the reassurances of our delegation's full support to H.E. Ambassador José Antonio Zabalgaitia Trejo of Mexico, Chairperson of the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of States Parties. I would also like to express our sincere appreciation for the leadership of the Director-General, H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias, in these challenging times. Lithuania has full trust in the effective and impartial work of the Technical Secretariat in implementing its functions under the Chemical Weapons Convention ("the Convention").

Lithuania condemns in the strongest possible terms the heinous attack on Alexei Navalny in Russia with a nerve agent from the Novichok group, as has been confirmed by three independent specialised laboratories from Germany, France, and Sweden, as well as by two OPCW designated laboratories following an OPCW technical assistance visit. The use of a nerve agent constitutes a violation of the Convention. Lithuania firmly stands by the notion that any use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances is a violation of international law and completely unacceptable. We consider it of the utmost importance to take determined action to investigate this situation and bring the perpetrators to justice.

This poisoning attack occurred in the territory of the Russian Federation; therefore, we urge the Russian authorities to address all questions related to this attack in a transparent way and without further delays. We call on Russia to cooperate fully with the OPCW ensuring an impartial, international investigation of this incident.



We regret to note that the Syrian Arab Republic has not fulfilled its obligations following the decision of the Executive Council (EC-94/DEC.2). This situation causes grave concern about the commitment of the Syrian Arab Republic to uphold the norms of the Convention, which it has decided to adhere to when signing up to the Convention. Accordingly, further appropriate action must be discussed and taken during the course of the Twenty-Fifth Conference of the States Parties, and we stand ready to support that. We must take bold steps to ensure that there would be no impunity for the use of chemical weapons.

The repetitive use of chemical weapons and attempts to discredit investigations into these cases undermines our efforts and our mission for a world free of chemical weapons. We would like to reiterate our full support to the Investigation and Identification Team and its work. It is an important pillar of a strong and effective OPCW. Equally, we continue to support the tireless efforts of the Technical Secretariat in promoting accountability.

Lithuania supports the valuable work of the Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons and remains strongly convinced that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be brought to justice.

Lithuania calls on all States Parties to support the adoption of the Director-General's draft Budget, which will enable the OPCW to continue its vital work throughout 2021.

It is essential that the Convention remains responsive to new and emerging threats. We welcome the initiative of Australia, Switzerland, and the United States of America relating to the use of aerosolised central nervous system-acting chemicals and are pleased to co-sponsor it. We look forward to the respective decision being adopted in the near future.

The Convention requires States Parties to assign the highest priority to ensuring the safety of people and to protecting the environment during the implementation of its obligations when destroying the chemicals. I would like to reiterate that environmental risks are posed not only by the destruction of chemical weapons today, but also by remnants of previous wars, including sea-dumped chemical weapons.

We ask that this statement be made an official document of the Conference and published on the external server and the public website of the OPCW.

I thank you, Mr Chairperson.

--- 0 ---