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**SAUDI ARABIA**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ABDULAZIZ BIN ABDULLAH ABOHAIMED  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA  
TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION  
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,  
Mr Director-General,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I am pleased to congratulate you, Excellency, the Representative of Mexico, Ambassador José Antonio Trejo, on your election as Chairperson of the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. I am confident that your extensive diplomatic experience and wisdom will contribute to the success of this important session. I take this opportunity to thank the Chairperson of the Conference at its Twenty-Fourth Session, His Excellency Krassimir Kostov, Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria, for his able leadership of the Conference. I am also pleased to express our appreciation and deep thanks to His Excellency the Director-General, Mr Fernando Arias, as well as to his assistants in the Technical Secretariat and all staff members of the Organisation for their efforts to convene the Conference under the novel coronavirus pandemic. I also welcome the statement delivered by Ambassador Fikrat Akhundov, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

Achieving the universality of the Convention is the sole guarantee for the prohibition of the production and use of chemical weapons. My delegation commends the efforts of the Organisation in this regard. By the same token, my delegation urges States that have not yet done so to join the Convention.

Convinced of the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention aimed at promoting international peace and security, my country attaches great importance to implementing its obligations under the Convention, in keeping with its consistent policy aimed at promoting cooperation on the prohibition and non-proliferation of all types of weapons of mass destruction. My country has been keen on active participation in all events and conferences of the Organisation and has worked constructively with the members of the Executive Council to support and implement decisions that would help achieve the purposes of the Convention.

While acknowledging the progress made in the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, my delegation notes that the discrepancies and inconsistencies in the Syrian initial declaration and subsequent submissions raise many questions. It calls on the Syrian authorities to cooperate with the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) and the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW.



My delegation has reviewed the report of the Director-General (EC-96/DG.1, dated 14 October 2020), which indicated that the Syrian authorities failed to implement the measures specified in Executive Council decision EC-94/DEC.2 issued in response to the first report of the Identification and Investigation Team (IIT), which is mandated to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The IIT report concluded that there were reasonable grounds to believe that the perpetrators of the use of sarin as a chemical weapon in Ltamenah on 24 and 30 March 2017, and chlorine as a chemical weapon in Ltamenah on 25 March 2017 were individuals belonging to the Syrian Arab Air Force. My delegation expresses its consistent position denouncing and deploring the use of chemical weapons by anyone, and calls for holding the perpetrators accountable. It reiterates its support for the work of the IIT and calls upon the Syrian authorities to cooperate with the IIT, to grant the Team access to the Syrian territory, and to cooperate with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW in implementing all relevant decisions on the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

My delegation calls for and encourages further consultations and discussions among Member States before adopting any decision pertaining to the proposal on the use of central nervous system-acting chemicals for law enforcement purposes.

My delegation expresses its support for the proposed Draft Budget for 2021 submitted by the Director-General of the OPCW and calls upon the Member States to support it in order to enable the Organisation to fulfil its duties in the best manner.

My delegation stresses the importance for the Organisation to continue to adhere to the criterion of equitable geographical distribution with regard to the recruitment policy within the Organisation, as provided for in Article VIII of the Convention. It is also important to make further efforts to develop training and qualification programmes for human resources in developing States, in particular, in accordance with a mechanism that contributes to balanced geographical distribution.

In conclusion, Mr Chairperson, the Convention stresses the importance of economic and technological development, as well as international cooperation in chemical activities for purposes not prohibited thereunder. While acknowledging the efforts made in the past, we believe that further action is urgently needed in order to meet the requirements of Article XI of the Convention, in particular with respect to the transfer to developing States of technology, equipment, and expertise in chemical industries not prohibited under the Convention, as well as the removal of barriers imposed by many States in this regard. This will help promote international economic development for the benefit of all parties.

In this context, I wish to indicate that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been supporting the Associate Programme of the OPCW. The Saudi company SABIC, which is a world leader in chemical production for peaceful purposes, has hosted a number of participants in the said programme.

I ask that this statement be considered an official document of the current session and posted on the external server and public website of the Organisation.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.