



Embassy of Finland
The Hague

Statement by Finland
Ambassador Päivi Kaukoranta
Permanent Representative of Finland to the OPCW
Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the OPCW
The Hague, 29 November – 3 December 2021

Mr. Chairperson, Mr. Director-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Finland, I wish to warmly congratulate you, Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen of Norway for your election as the Chairperson of the Conference of the States Parties and express both our full confidence in your leadership and our readiness to work with you for a successful outcome of the Conference. I would also like to thank Ambassador José Antonio Zabalgaitia Trejo of Mexico, the Chairperson of the 25th Conference of the States Parties and Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki, the Chairperson of the Executive Council, for their professionalism and effectiveness in fulfilling their duties.

Finland would like to express our sincere gratitude to Director-General Fernando Arias and the OPCW Technical Secretariat for their tireless work and determination in advancing the implementation of the Convention, especially amidst challenging circumstances. I would also like to reaffirm my country's unwavering support and confidence to the Technical Secretariat's expertise, professionalism, impartiality, and independence. Finland fully supports the appointment of Ambassador Arias for a second term in office. We would like to express our appreciation and strong support to the Director-General's efforts to enhance gender mainstreaming and the objective of a more gender-balanced, diverse Technical Secretariat. We encourage further efforts to ensure an inclusive working environment that embraces gender equality.

Finland aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union. In addition, I wish to highlight a few issues from a national perspective.

Mr. Chairperson,

Finland remains deeply concerned about the repeated violations of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The use of chemical weapons—by anyone and under any circumstances—is a threat to international peace and security. It is completely unacceptable and a clear violation of international law, that may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity. Finland condemns the use of chemical weapons in the strongest terms and calls on all States Parties to respect their obligations under the Convention.

Finland welcomes the decision adopted by the 25th Conference of the States Parties suspending certain rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic, as the appropriate and just response to the flagrant violations of the core principles of the Convention. The reported deterioration of the Syrian Arab Republic's cooperation with the Technical Secretariat is deeply concerning. We call on the Syrian Arab Republic to return to full compliance with its obligations and to engage in good faith with the Technical Secretariat in accordance with the Convention and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2118.

Finland reiterates its unequivocal condemnation of the use of a chemical nerve agent of the "Novichok" group to poison Alexei Navalnyi on the territory of the Russian Federation in August 2020. We regret that the continued calls to conduct an impartial, transparent and thorough investigation have not been heeded, and that the OPCW Technical Assistance Visit to examine the circumstances of the assassination attempt has not been facilitated. Finland joined the group of forty-five States Parties in requesting further explanations from the Russian Federation under Article 9.2 of the Convention. We again urge the Russian Federation to credibly explain the circumstances of this chemical weapons use and to comply with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

Achieving a world permanently free of chemical weapons requires predictable and solid financial resources. The Director General's proposed programme and budget 2022-2023 has our support. We encourage all States Parties to enable the OPCW to continue its crucial work by paying their assessed contributions in full and on time. In addition to financial resources, the OPCW needs adequate and qualified human resources and expertise. Finland welcomes efforts to amend the OPCW Tenure Policy with the goal of finding solutions that would best benefit the organization.

We are looking forward to the inauguration and activities of the new Centre for Chemistry and Technology (CCT). The new "ChemTech Centre" will significantly increase OPCW's laboratory capacity, strengthen Technical Secretariat's capacity building activities, and advance the implementation of the Convention. I would like to express my appreciation for the Director-General's successful efforts in keeping the project on track during the pandemic.

Finland supports the decision entitled "Understanding Regarding the Aerosolized Use of Central Nervous System-Acting Chemicals for Law Enforcement Purposes" adopted by the Ninety-Sixth Session of the Executive Council (EC-96/DEC.7). Given the risks involved, we find it important to clarify that the use of these chemicals for law enforcement purposes is prohibited under the Convention. We encourage States Parties to join in supporting the decision.

To conclude, I kindly request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session and posted on the external server and public website.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.