

## **The 26th session of the Conference of State Parties of the OPCW**

### **General Debate**

#### **Statement by H.E. Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen**

#### **Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Norway**

Mr. Chair,

Mr. Director-General,

Distinguished Colleagues,

Norway aligns itself with the statement made by Ambassador Marjolijn Van Deelen, special envoy for disarmament and non-proliferation, on behalf of the European Union and other states parties. I wish to add the following in my own national capacity.

Allow me to begin, Mr. Chair, by commending both the Technical Secretariat and the General Committee for their hard work to ensure that this Conference of State Parties can convene in a safe and responsible manner. Norway would also like to thank all the other delegations for their constructive approach and contributions in this regard.

Norway vigorously condemns all use of chemical weapons. This is an abhorrent violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and in breach of international law. We also demand an end of impunity for the perpetrators of these horrific crimes and express our full support and commitment to all joint efforts to this end.

Norway reiterates its support to the Technical Secretariat and to Director-General Fernando Arias in particular. We have full confidence in the impartial and diligent work conducted by the Secretariat and its staff and of the OPCW

designated laboratories. We also reject all efforts to discredit the Secretariat and its staff.

The 25<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of States Parties made an important decision in response to the first report from the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) on the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The decision, which suspends Syrian voting rights and other privileges according to the CWC, was both timely and necessary. We continue to urge the Syrian Arab Republic to comply fully with all its obligations in relation to the CWC.

Norway commends the excellent and dedicated work that is being done in Syria by the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) and the Fact-finding Mission (FFM). We reiterate our demand that Syrian authorities must cooperate fully with all branches of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW, as well as with its policy making organs. We regret Syria's lack of cooperation in issuing visas to OPCW staff, in breach of UN Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). We also note with great concern that the number of outstanding issues in relation to the Syrian fulfilment of their obligations according to the CWC is actually growing, not decreasing.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to reiterate once more our deep concern in relation to the confirmed use of a Novichok nerve agent against the Russian citizen Alexei Navalny. Analysis by a number of independent laboratories have all confirmed that Navalny was exposed to a Novichok agent before falling gravely ill. This represents a blatant violation of the CWC and international law. We call on the Russian Federation to disclose in a comprehensive and transparent manner the circumstances of this chemical weapons attack. Norway does not consider that the Russian Federation has provided answers to the doubts and concerns

raised on 5 October this year by 45 states parties, pursuant to Article IX, paragraph 2 of the CWC.

Mr. Chair

Norway would also like to express its support for the proposed decision concerning the aerosolized use of central nervous-system-acting chemicals for law enforcement purposes, which makes clear that such use is prohibited under the CWC. We thank Australia, Switzerland and the United States of America for their timely initiative and we urge all state parties to vote in favour of the decision during this session of the Conference of State Parties.

Norway supports the proposed programme and budget for OPCW for 2022, as recommended by the Executive Council. I would like to commend both the Secretariat and the two budget facilitators for their extensive and diligent work over the past months. I believe that all aspects of the budget have been thoroughly examined and that we have all been given the chance to raise questions and make inquiries. We urge all state parties to support the budget, as recommended.

Thank you, Mr Chair