

**26th SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES
TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION
STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
29 November-3 December, 2021, The Hague**

At the outset I would like to thank Ambassador Jose Antonio Zabalgotia Trejo of Mexico, Chairperson of the 25th Conference of States Parties, and congratulate Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen of Norway for his election as the Chairperson of the 26th Conference of States Parties.

It is obvious that the role of the Chemical Weapons Convention remains critical and it is our responsibility as State Parties to guarantee its full implementation. As a strong supporter of disarmament and non-proliferation, Armenia has always been committed to the letter and spirit of the Convention, and honored the obligations under its legally binding instruments. Since the ratification of the Convention the Armenian Government has adopted relevant laws, rules and regulations for implementing the provisions of the Convention. These legal documents have become an integral part of Armenia's export control system that is basically consistent with international good practices.

I would also like to underline the role of the National Authority which has formed an effective mechanism in preparing national implementation plan and serves as a bridge for operative liaison with the Organisation and other international partners and stakeholders. It is worth mentioning that all annual declarations have been submitted in a timely manner and here we commend the role of national experts in the preparation thereof.

Mr. Chairman,

We are living in unconventional times that require unconventional solutions. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way of life around the world in a short period of time, leaving its toll also on security-related domains. More than a year ago the UN Secretary-General officially called upon the international community, particularly those involved in military conflicts, to adhere to Global Ceasefire and focus all the efforts to fight the COVID-19 Pandemic. As a strong promoter of peace and security, Armenia was among the first countries that supported this initiative. Unfortunately, Azerbaijan ignored the UN Secretary-General's appeal by launching a large-scale war of aggression against Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), with direct involvement of its ally

Turkey. On October 30, 2020 the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan used an incendiary ammunition of mass destruction, allegedly containing chemical elements (probably white phosphorus) against the peaceful residents of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), causing long-term severe damage to both peaceful population and environment. More than 1815 hectares of forest area was damaged almost in the whole territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, on top of that many civilians got burns of different degrees.

This was another stark manifestation of the Azerbaijani aggressive policy to totally exterminate Armenians of Artsakh (the Nagorno-Karabakh). On numerous occasions the Armenian side has applied to the OPCW Technical Secretariat as well as partner nations to dispatch a fact-finding mission to give a proper assessment to these war crimes which is in total contradiction to the International Humanitarian Law, other conventions, including CWC. The importance of this request is especially emphasized by the Report of the Team of Independent Medical Experts from France on the evidences of chemical burns during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War, which was officially presented to the Technical Secretariat by our Permanent Representation, and was distributed to the Member States by the Technical Secretariat upon the request of Armenia. Regrettably, yet again Armenia's appeals were turned a blind eye upon. This is why, we use this opportunity to once again call upon the Technical Secretariat to be consistent and to carry its functions and responsibilities in an impartial and objective manner.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, I would like to reiterate the Armenia's adherence to the principles and objectives of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction.

I would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document and post it on the OPCW external server "Catalyst" and on public website.

Thank you.