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**SAUDI ARABIA**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ZIAD BIN MAASHI AL ATIYAH  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA TO  
THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

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

I am pleased to welcome you again, Excellency Chairperson, Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki of the Kingdom of Morocco. I am confident that your outstanding professional experience and great wisdom will contribute to the success of this session. We express our support for the effort to ensure its success. I would like to express our appreciation to the Director-General for his comprehensive report, as well as to all staff members of the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation. 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.

Convinced of the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention, 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 weapons of mass destruction, including making the Middle East region free from all weapons of mass destruction. My country also attaches great importance to achieving the universality of the Convention in view of its role in enhancing international peace and security. We urge States that have not yet done so to join the Convention. My country's delegation stresses that the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as weapons anywhere, by anyone, and under any circumstances is deplorable and completely inconsistent with the provisions of the Convention and the legal norms and standards of the international community.

Despite the progress made in the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, the discrepancies and inconsistencies in Syria's initial declaration and subsequent submissions are a source of concern for us. My country's delegation calls on the Syrian authorities to cooperate with the Declaration Assessment Team and the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW in order to implement all decisions relating to chemical weapons use in Syria. Also, it voices its principled position condemning and deploring the use of chemical weapons by any party whatsoever and stresses the need to bring perpetrators to account.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about extraordinary circumstances that made the OPCW adopt measures and precautions consistent with those extraordinary circumstances. In order to enable the Executive Council to convene regularly in emergency circumstances, the proposal by the Federal Republic of Germany is both timely and appropriate, calling for an Executive



Council decision to allow for convening Executive Council meetings and sessions remotely, using virtual meeting technology, or in another venue in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In this connection, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is pleased to be one of the sponsors of the draft decision adopting the German proposal, as it lays the foundation for a statutory mechanism for the Council to meet regularly and fills a procedural gap. We call upon all members of the Executive Council to support and adopt the decision by consensus in order to facilitate the work of our august council in emergency circumstances.

My country's delegation expresses support for the Draft Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2022–2023 submitted by the Director-General of the OPCW. It hopes that the Council adopts the draft Programme and Budget by consensus, as much as possible, and submit it to the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties for adoption. We call upon the Member States to support it in order to enable the Organisation to conduct its activities and fulfil its duties.

I would like to express profuse thanks to the Director-General for his outstanding efforts over the past period in managing the work of the Organisation with the utmost competence and professionalism, which we have witnessed since his appointment as Director-General of the Organisation. In this connection, I am pleased to voice my country's support for the reappointment of the Director-General for a second term of office.

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 more efforts are 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, the new Centre for Chemistry and Technology, whose foundation stone was laid in a ceremony organised recently, constitutes a turning point in the journey of our esteemed organisation and a fundamental bridge for achieving States Parties' aspirations, particularly in the transfer of technology and technical assistance to States Parties, and will be a beacon of science and knowledge in the domain of chemistry.

I request 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.

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