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SLOVAKIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JURAJ MACHÁČ
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

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

The Slovak Republic fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Member States of the European Union and aligned countries.

I take this opportunity to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

Firstly, the Slovak Republic would like to congratulate H.E. Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen of Norway for being elected as the Chairperson of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. His expertise and skills are most welcomed qualities considering the uneasy circumstances we are all facing, which is a good guarantee for the successful proceedings and outcomes of this session.

Equally, the Slovak Republic would like to communicate its appreciation towards the effective leadership of H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias, OPCW Director-General, which has proven to be fuelled by utmost diligence and responsibility. We commend his tireless efforts and those of the Technical Secretariat in ensuring the Organisation's adamant and strictly apolitical approach towards the achievement of our mutual goal—the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons in the world.

Due to the aforementioned reasons, we fully subscribe to the statement of the European Union and its aligning and associating partners that marked the current OPCW Director-General as the person best suited to lead the Organisation and therefore, he can rely on the Slovak Republic to fully support his future reappointment for a next term of office.

In the past, we beheld what chemical weapons are capable of and what disastrous consequences their usage can have. We stress that it is both ours, the Member States', and humanity's obligation to work extensively to eliminate chemical weapons and put an end to this human invention threatening the existence of mankind itself. The Slovak Republic remains strongly committed to the principles of the Chemical Weapons Convention and is deeply concerned about every sign or report of their violation.



Allow me to briefly make some comments on some of the most pressing issues from our perspective.

The Slovak Republic fully supports steps taken by the Secretariat regarding the Syrian Arab Republic. We regret the continuous non-compliance of the Syrian Arab Republic with the obligations it assumed in 2013. The suspension of its voting rights in April 2021 shall not be considered as the ultimate aim. This decision of the Conference of the States Parties follows the failure of the Syrian Arab Republic to respect its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Slovak Republic urges the Syrian Arab Republic to provide all relevant information and close any gaps stemming from its initial declaration. As transparency is the cornerstone of OPCW, we call on the Syrian Arab Republic to allow the OPCW personnel unrestricted access, according to the previously agreed terms. Any obstruction with the issuance of visas that leads, inter alia, to the disruption of a continuous presence in the command post in Damascus, is deemed as unacceptable by the Slovak Republic.

Even though almost 30 years have passed since the adoption of the Chemical Weapons Convention, we unfortunately still witness chemical weapons attacks against civilians. As a strong supporter of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Slovak Republic is deeply concerned, particularly by the repeated use of chemical weapons. We are also deeply concerned by any efforts to undermine the impartial and highly professional work of the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat. In this respect, the position of the Slovak Republic remains clear and firm—any use of chemical weapons by anybody, anywhere, and under any circumstances is unacceptable. In this regard, we feel obliged to recall the case of the confirmed poisoning of Mr Navalny by a substance from the novichok group developed in the Russian Federation. The Slovak Republic does not consider its response to questions submitted under Article IX of the Convention as sufficient. Therefore, we have joined 45 States Parties and urge the Russian Federation to provide additional answers to the questions in accordance with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Last but not least, taking into account years of discussion, the Slovak Republic supports the work of like-minded countries and joined their efforts towards the adoption of the decision of the Conference of the States Parties entitled “Understanding Regarding the Aerosolised use of Central Nervous System-Acting Chemicals for Law Enforcement Purposes”. The Slovak Republic is convinced that the adoption of this draft decision will be crucial for the future proper implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and would contribute to the prevention of the use of aerosolised central nervous system-acting chemicals for offensive purposes by both State and non-State actors.

Mr Chairperson, on behalf of the Slovak Republic, I kindly ask for this statement to be considered as an official document of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference and to be published on the external server, as well as on the public website of the Organisation.