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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-NINTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

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

At the outset, I am pleased to welcome and congratulate you, Excellency Chairperson, Ambassador Eniola Olaitan Ajayi of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, on your election as Chairperson of the Executive Council. I am confident that your outstanding professional experience and great wisdom will lead to this session's success for which we affirm our support. I take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to H.E. Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki of the Kingdom of Morocco for his efforts and able leadership of the Council over the past period. I would also like to congratulate Mr Fernando Arias on his re-election as Director-General of the OPCW and to reiterate our deep appreciation and thanks to him for his comprehensive report, as well as to all staff members of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW for their outstanding efforts. 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 Technical Secretariat of the OPCW and its teams in order to implement all decisions relating to chemical weapons use in Syria. It also 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. In this context, we welcome the issuance of the two reports of the



Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in January 2022, regarding the two incidents in Marea in the Aleppo Governorate and the Kafr Zeita incident in the Hama Governorate and reiterate our support for the FFM's work.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about extraordinary circumstances that prompted the OPCW to adopt measures and precautions consistent with such 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 at the earliest session of the Council, in order to facilitate the work of the august Council in emergency circumstances.

The Convention stresses the importance of economic and technological development, as well as international cooperation in chemical activities for purposes not prohibited thereunder. While appreciating 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 related to 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, my country was pleased to help fund the new Centre for Chemistry and Technology, the foundation stone of which was laid in a ceremony organised recently, as it 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 the provision of technical assistance to States Parties. The Centre for Chemistry and Technology will also serve as a beacon of science and knowledge in the domain of chemistry.

In conclusion, Madam Chairperson, 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, Madam Chairperson.

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