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FINLAND

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PÄIVI KAUKORANTA PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FINLAND TO THE OPCW AT THE 100TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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

Finland wishes to welcome H.E. Ambassador Ziad M.D. Al Atiyah of Saudi Arabia in his new role as the Chairperson of the Executive Council. I would also like to reiterate Finland's strong support to the OPCW Technical Secretariat (the Secretariat). We thank Director-General Fernando Arias and his staff for their dedication and determined efforts. We have full confidence in the expertise, professionalism, impartiality, and independence of the Secretariat in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention) and other tasks assigned to it by the States Parties. Finland remains a staunch supporter of the Convention and the work of the OPCW to keep the world free of chemical weapons.

Finland aligns itself with the statement made by the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union. In addition, I wish to highlight a few issues from a national perspective.

Finland strongly condemns Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. It is a flagrant violation of international law. We firmly support Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. Russia's military actions target Ukraine but are also an attack on the entire European security order. Russia should cease military operations immediately. We denounce Russia's engagement in disinformation campaigns spreading unsubstantiated allegations against Ukraine and others regarding chemical weapons.

Finland condemns in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons in all circumstances, by anyone, anywhere, and at any time. The use of chemical weapons undermines international peace and security and constitutes a violation of international law and can amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Addressing the threat of chemical weapons use is essential for upholding international norms. Impunity for the use of chemical weapons cannot be tolerated. We continue to support collective efforts to ensure accountability for perpetrators of chemical attacks, including through the International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.



The decision of the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention in April 2021 to suspend certain rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic sends a strong message against impunity for the use of chemical weapons. The decision was the appropriate response to the well-established and substantiated failure of the Syrian Arab Republic to respect its obligations under the Convention. We call on the Syrian Arab Republic to return to full compliance with its obligations and to cooperate constructively with the Secretariat.

We thank the Secretariat for their work on all aspects of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, and look forward to further efforts including the next reports of the Investigation and Identification Team. In support of the Secretariat's work in Syria, Finland will contribute EUR 100,000 to the OPCW trust fund for Syria missions this year.

Finland reiterates its unequivocal condemnation of the use of a chemical nerve agent from the novichok group to poison Alexei Navalny on the territory of the Russian Federation in August 2020. We remain deeply concerned that calls for a thorough and transparent investigation into the assassination attempt have not been answered. We, yet again, urge the Russian Federation to disclose and credibly explain the circumstances of this chemical weapons use and to fully comply with its obligations under the Convention. Full cooperation with the OPCW is imperative.

Mr Chairperson, the Fifth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (Fifth Review Conference) will be an opportunity to assess and ensure the continued relevance of the Convention for international non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. In this context, I would like to express our gratitude and full support to the Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group, Ambassador Lauri Kuusing of Estonia, for steering the preparatory process in an open and inclusive manner. We are confident that the chosen thematic, crosscutting approach will be beneficial as we seek to provide the best possible guidance to the Technical Secretariat and the future OPCW.

I would like to conclude by expressing our appreciation and strong support to the Director-General's efforts towards a more diverse Secretariat. We welcome steps towards gender equality in the Organisation, and emphasise the importance of gender mainstreaming in all areas of the Secretariat's work. In these efforts, the recognition and consideration of the gendered impacts of chemical weapons is key.

I kindly request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session and posted on the external server and public website.

Thank you.

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