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**SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MILAD ATIEH  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC TO  
THE OPCW AT THE 100TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL  
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 6(C)**

Mr Chairperson,

Firstly, concerning the recent monthly reports by the Director-General, we have read with great interest the Director-General's 102nd, 103rd, and 104th monthly reports. Some of these reports included subjective judgements and conclusions, even to the extent of levelling accusations against Syria in paragraph 15 of the Director-General's 104th monthly report. The latter stipulates that Syria's failure to fulfil its obligations hampers the work of the Technical Secretariat, calling on Syria, in paragraph 14 of the said report, to change its attitude. The Director-General links Syria's failure to fulfil its obligations, in part, with its failure to submit what is required of it under decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1, EC-94/DEC.2, and C-25/DEC.9. The question to be asked is this: Is Syria required to declare chemical weapons production and storage facilities and means of delivery which it does not possess? This compelled Dr Faisal Mekdad, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Head of the Syrian National Authority, to respond to all that was mentioned in the said reports, explaining that the subjective information and the escalation of accusations in the reports by the Director-General provided the ground and pretext for well-known States to level accusations against Syria. Regrettably, the reports by the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat were formulated in a way suggesting that the Syrian Arab Republic refuses to hold the twenty-fifth round of consultations. Those reports have turned into a fundamental part of the incitement campaign against Syria and a material for accusing Syria of failing to cooperate with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW.

Never before has the Organisation adopted such an approach which reflects the Director-General's departure from his mandates under the Convention which makes him the person most keen to implement the provisions of the Convention and requires him to be a fair and impartial party, and not adopt a position hostile to a State Party. This is because the Director-General represents all OPCW States Parties and is the highest authority within the Technical Secretariat.

Secondly, concerning the Syrian monthly reports, Syria has continued to provide the Technical Secretariat, and through it the States Parties, with monthly reports. Between March and May 2022, Syria provided the Technical Secretariat with three reports, namely the 101st, 102nd, and 103rd monthly reports. The last such report that Syria sent to the Technical Secretariat was the 104th report, dated 15 June 2022.



In every monthly report, Syria clarifies a lot of important information and corrects much of the subjective information contained in the reports by the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat. We hope that the missions of the States Parties have read those reports.

Thirdly, concerning the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), my delegation wishes to mention that, over the last four months, the Syrian National Authority has addressed several letters to the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat, in which it raised numerous concerns and comments on the content of the Director-General's letters and monthly reports and the notes by the Technical Secretariat. Nevertheless, the Technical Secretariat maintains its position refusing to facilitate the holding of the twenty-fifth round of consultations and to take Syria's rightful concerns and comments into account.

In his last letter to the Director-General, Dr Faisal Mekdad, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Head of the Syrian National Authority, concurred with the Director-General that the exchange of letters provides some but not all of the solutions, and that the exchange of letters is not an alternative to rounds of consultations. The Minister of Foreign Affairs affirmed Syria's keenness to hold this round as soon as possible. But at the same time, we recall that, throughout the past eight years, Syria has never refused the DAT deployment. DAT visits to Syria were usually carried out according to arrangements agreed by both sides, in accordance with their respective commitments. Since 2018, Syria has committed to the agreement reached concerning the continuation of consultations with the aim of making progress in all matters related to the Syrian dossier through structured and constructive dialogue. In implementation of these agreed foundations and proceeding from its compliance with the provisions of the Convention, Syria, which has nothing to hide in this regard, has been working very seriously and cooperating in a constructive manner. It has proposed to the Technical Secretariat many transparency measures and actions that are not provided for in the Convention, with a view to resolving issues relating to its initial declaration. It has provided the DAT with facilitations unmatched by any other State Party to the Convention.

We were surprised to see Syria being held responsible for the failure to hold the twenty-fifth round of consultations between the Syrian National Authority and the DAT. The truth, however, is that Syria has welcomed all the proposals made by the Technical Secretariat to hold the twenty-fifth round of consultations, expressing its full readiness to hold this round in Damascus and The Hague, and recently in Beirut. What Syria requested, in exercise of its sovereign right, is that one DAT member be replaced by any other member whom the Technical Secretariat deems fit for the task. It has never refused to grant the other members of the team the requested visas. In return for Syria's extended hand for cooperation in good faith to end this dossier, we were surprised that the Technical Secretariat repeated its unprecedented and unusual position refusing to deploy the DAT until Syria has issued entry visas to all DAT members. This time, you even accused Syria explicitly of obstructing the work of the Technical Secretariat in this regard.

Syria affirms that it will continue its constructive approach and unprecedented cooperation with the Technical Secretariat. It will remain committed to fulfilling its obligations and stands ready to move forward, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and the agreement reached between the Syrian National Authority and the DAT in March 2019. On the other hand, Syria requests that its sovereign point of view as a State Party be respected. If intentions are good, the DAT may be deployed for the twenty-fifth round of consultations as soon as possible, while listening to Syria's objective reasons for requesting the replacement of a DAT member

by whomever you deem appropriate, instead of creating a problem or giving false impressions about Syria's commitment and cooperation with the Organisation.

All States Parties know perfectly that, as an objective assessment conducted in good faith would show, Syria has been dealing with the DAT since 2013 and, throughout that long period, has never obstructed the work of this team. This proves Syria's willingness and sincere intention to end this dossier.

Syria reiterates its call to the Technical Secretariat to hold the twenty-fifth round of consultations as soon as possible. Syria also affirms its keenness to pursue positive and constructive cooperation with the OPCW Technical Secretariat, in the manner that would guarantee its rights and respect its sovereignty, without any pressure or politicisation. Syria requests the Technical Secretariat to send the DAT to Syria today, not tomorrow, because Syria is keen on ending this dossier as soon as possible.

Finally, Syria calls on some Western States to take its positive and constructive attitudes and full cooperation with the OPCW into account, to stop turning the DAT and its reports into a tool of political pressure and blackmail against Syria and using it as a means to level baseless accusations against it, to see the glass half full, to steer away from hasty and wrong positions, to stop levelling baseless accusations to Syria, and to seek the truth.

Fourthly, concerning the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), this room bears witness to what we, along with many States Parties, have said repeatedly about the grave and serious flaws marring the working methods of the FFM and its departure from the substance and provisions of the Convention, the Verification Annex, and its own Terms of Reference.

The Technical Secretariat of the OPCW and some known States turn deaf ears to those objective comments on the working methods of the FFM. More still, some States endorse and support the Mission and its reports blindly for blatant and purely political reasons and not based on professional and ethical backgrounds, without the slightest consideration for the norms of integrity and justice that are known to all.

Unlike some, we do not make accusations without proof. Facts and practical experiences with the FFM have proven that the latter works repeatedly in a manner that is far from professionalism and fairness.

Nevertheless, the FFM has continued its approach, issuing reports with questionable findings. Some incidents on the agenda of the Mission occurred at periods ranging from four to eight years. You can imagine what it means to investigate incidents based on outdated material evidence, biological and environmental samples, and witnesses, and in the absence of a legal chain of custody for samples, as well as of other requirements of a fair, professional, and impartial investigation. Furthermore, it is regrettable that the open sources, information, and evidence provided by terrorist groups, in addition to the White Helmets terrorist group, formed the main source of the findings of the FFM reports, while the FFM and the Technical Secretariat are ignoring the evidence and corroborated information provided by Syria.

When talking about the FFM and its wrong working methods, we have to mention the comments made by Syria and other States on many alleged incidents. Until now, the Technical Secretariat has not been able to provide objective replies to the comments that we made about some incidents, such as Douma (2018), Aleppo (2018), Khan Shaykhun (2017), and others, and the scandals raised by impartial institutions, investigators, and researchers with a global

reputation of expertise and wisdom. This compels us to ask the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW a legitimate question on the fate of these scandals and objective scientific criticism of the FFM reports. The Technical Secretariat says that the reports issued by the FFM cannot be revised. This, in itself, contradicts the provisions of the Convention and the rules of fair and impartial investigation. What is the fate of those innocent people indicted based on unfounded accusations? This matter concerns everyone, not just Syria.

Nevertheless, despite the reluctance and procrastination in issuing reports on incidents reported by the Syrian Government five to six years ago, despite all that we have raised above, and for fear of being accused of failing to cooperate, Syria agreed to grant the FFM the requested visas to enter Syria to investigate specific incidents in recent months and to provide information and evidence and prepare witnesses. This is notwithstanding the difficulty of this matter, as a long time has passed since those incidents occurred. As a State, we act with transparency and sincerity, and we do not falsify facts.

Finally, a question to all: What interest does the Syrian Arab Army have in using a barrel or an alleged chlorine cylinder, as they like to mention in their reports, as this use will in most cases lead to breathing difficulty to some people, while traditional weapons can achieve greater positive results on the ground compared to chlorine, which causes breathing difficulty to three people as was the case in the alleged Kabani incident? The United States former Secretary of State Pompeo showed interest in the latter incident and explicitly accused the Syrian government of it, even before the FFM had investigated the incident. We say that the findings of the FFM team on this incident will be in no way different from what Pompeo said, and time will prove that.

Syria affirms that the time has come to tell the truth and work seriously on correcting the working methods of the FFM in order to preserve the credibility and future of the OPCW.

I thank you and I request that this statement be considered an official document of the 100th Session of the Executive Council and posted on the OPCW's public website and on Catalyst.