

**United Kingdom**

**EC 101 Agenda 6(g)**

**Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use**

Thank you Mr Chair,

As noted in the United Kingdom's national statement this Council is charged with promoting effective implementation of, and compliance with the Convention. It is our responsibility to challenge all instances of chemical weapons use.

The Technical Secretariat is obliged to keep us informed of doubts, ambiguities and uncertainties about compliance with the Convention.

The Director-General's report on the Work of the Declaration Assessment Team for this Council meeting has yet again confirmed that Syria's declaration is not accurate and complete in accordance with the Convention.

Syria has used chemical weapons on multiple occasions, breaking the long-established norm against their use and violating international and humanitarian law. As long as the Syrian authorities are unable to acknowledge that fact, the risk of further chemical weapons use remains a concern.

The Russian Federation often defends the Syrian regime, perpetuating falsehoods about chemical weapons use and seeking to undermine confidence in the work of the OPCW. We are sadly familiar with Russia's attempts to criticise process and working methodologies when the evidence does not support Russia's world view. The Russian Federation has also used chemical weapons, in a reckless attack in my own country in 2018. And then again in another attempted

assassination in 2020, this time targeting Alexey Navalny on Russian soil.

Russia must fully declare and destroy the stocks it holds of these banned chemical weapons.

Mr Chair,

Russia's track record of chemical weapons use poses a grave challenge to us all. Russia's military onslaught in Ukraine and the threats made by some of its proxies about chemical weapons use are abhorrent. The United Kingdom is deeply committed to supporting Ukraine in the face of Russia's assault on its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Like many others in this room the United Kingdom is providing humanitarian and protective assistance to Ukraine. This includes 220 million pounds worth of humanitarian support, with over 11 million items of medical supplies sent to Ukraine.

We are delivering 1 million pounds worth of medicines and medical supplies with a CBRN application for use in case of a chemical or biological weapons attacks. This includes personal protective equipment, antibiotics and painkillers.

The UK is providing thousands of respirators, filters and individual decontamination kits on a bilateral basis. And we are committing funding to the Article Ten trust fund in the OPCW for the provision of protective equipment to Ukraine.

Article Ten clearly establishes the rights of all States Parties to receive assistance and protection against the use or threat of use of chemical weapons. Russia's illegal war in Ukraine underscores the importance of those provisions. Just as the UK will never recognise the illegal

annexation of Ukrainian territory, we will never stand by in the face of chemical weapons use.

Thank you Mr Chair.