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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 101ST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 5**

Mr Chairperson,

I will add some thoughts to Syria's general statement posted on the OPCW website:

Syria has fulfilled all that is required of it following its accession to the Convention in extremely difficult circumstances. Syria has fully cooperated for nine years, as is acknowledged by the OPCW. This full cooperation has never been mentioned in the reports by the Technical Secretariat, the Director-General, and some States Parties. Instead, this cooperation is ignored, and the language used suggests that Syria is obstructing the work of the OPCW and is not cooperating with it. Some States have even gone so far as to accuse Syria directly and explicitly of non-compliance. The best proof of the correctness of what we say is the content of the opening statement by the Director-General and the general statements of some States during this session. My country affirms that this approach must stop.

The question now is: on what grounds do some States build their baseless accusations? The answer is: they build their accusations on political grounds and not on professional, objective, or moral grounds. Time does not allow me to go into detail with regard to the false accusations and to respond to them in detail. But we ask those saying that Syria is not cooperating the following questions: has the Technical Secretariat complained of Syria's non-compliance over the past nine years? Has Syria prevented any OPCW team or any staff member of the Technical Secretariat from entering its territories? The fact is that Syria fully cooperates with the OPCW and affirms its readiness to cooperate with it, today and tomorrow. The truth is that Syria has fulfilled all its obligations and is keen on closing this dossier.

As for the Declaration Assessment Team and the rounds of consultations, particularly the twenty-fifth round of consultations, all that we heard and read from the Secretariat and some States is a pre-emption of the final outcomes of those consultations and an attempt to influence its outcomes. To those we say that consultations are still ongoing, so why pre-empt the outcomes and make accusations?

If the intention of Western States behind denying and ignoring Syria's cooperation is to prompt Syria to cease its cooperation with the OPCW, we say to them that Syria has taken the sovereign decision to cooperate constructively with the OPCW such as to guarantee its sovereign rights. I will give examples of the most recent forms of this cooperation. In August and September 2022, Syria provided all facilities to two teams of the Technical Secretariat visiting Syria. The initial



assessment indicated that Syria provided them with full support and all the facilities to ensure the success of their missions. This same conclusion was reached by the Secretariat, and we heard it from them. Syria granted visas to the personnel of the Secretariat and provided them with the required facilities. The other example is: have you read in any report by the Technical Secretariat or in the statements by some known States any mention of Syria's full cooperation and the facilities it extended to the inspection team in its eighth round of inspection of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre, which was conducted in November 2021?

Concerning the high-level meeting between the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Director-General, as a token of good will and proceeding from its keenness to hold this meeting, Syria made a proposal to the Technical Secretariat on 21 September 2022 to hold a preparatory meeting between representatives of the Syrian National Authority and representatives of the Technical Secretariat to discuss the necessary preparations for the meeting, including its agenda. The Secretariat replied through a note dated 23 September 2022, requesting a response to its previous proposal regarding the agenda. In a note addressed to the Technical Secretariat on 30 September 2022, the Syrian National Authority again requested the Secretariat's reply to its proposal to hold that meeting in Beirut as soon as possible in order to agree on the preparations required for holding that meeting. On the evening of 3 October, the Technical Secretariat, in its response, stated the need for communication and continued coordination between the focal points of both sides to agree on the agenda of the meeting.

Some States accused Syria and other States of attacking the Secretariat and obstructing its work. They showed in their statements their dedication to the OPCW and its future role. Those who really care for the OPCW must stop politicising its work. If we make constructive and objective comments and if we criticise the work of the Technical Secretariat and OPCW teams, it is because we care for the future of this Organisation and the performance of its technical role, as defined by the Convention.

The ones politicising the Syrian chemical dossier are those who justify repeated aggressions against the Syrian people, support terrorism which claimed the lives of thousands of Syrians and displaced a large part of Syrian people in broad daylight, and falsely accuse Syria of possessing chemical weapons or prohibited chemical activities and of having used chemical weapons.

I thank you and I request that this statement be considered an official document of the 101st Session of the Executive Council and posted on the OPCW's public website and Catalyst.

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