State of Israel

Statement to the Fifth Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons
Convention
H. E. Ambassador Modi Ephraim

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Director-General,

It is an honor to join you today in the 5th Review Conference of the Chemical
Weapons Convention. At the outset, please allow us to congratulate the Chairperson
on assuming the position, and let us assure you of our full cooperation. We wish to
congratulate the OPCW on the inauguration of the new Center for Chemistry and
Technology – it is a significant milestone, serving as a reminder of the Organization's
vital role.

Mr. Chairperson,
Since its establishment, the CWC has achieved a great deal in promoting the security
and wellbeing of the international community as a whole. As we set forth to evaluate
the implementation of the CWC, and chart the course of future operations, the
international community must focus on enhancing verification mechanisms and
promoting measures that address noncompliance.

Mr. Chairperson,
A decade ago, the Security Council mandated the elimination of Syria's chemical
weapons program. Yet there is overwhelming evidence that Syria's initial disclosures
of chemical weapons are not accurate or complete and must be subject to further
scrutiny.

The latest FFM reports are joined by additional reports and statements made by the OPCW Director General regarding gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the Syrian declaration. This poses a source of much concern that must be addressed. Israel fully supports the important work of the IIT, in carrying out the task of attributing the chemical attacks to their perpetrators and looks forward to the publication of the Team's upcoming reports.

In particular, the IIT report from January 2023, regarding the horrendous use of chemical weapons in Douma, similarly to the previous reports (April 2020 and April 2021), attributed full responsibility to the Syrian government for the chemical attack on civilians, which took place in 2018. The IIT's reports followed numerous findings of the DAT, the FFM and the JIM, which have been sharing crucial information since the first time Syria used chemical weapons on its own citizens in 2012.

The IIT's reports clearly call on the Syrian government to cooperate with the OPCW and the international community, in rectifying the gaps and discrepancies in its declaration on chemical weapons, and to take full responsibility for its actions in violation of the CWC, as well as, with regard to eliminating its chemical weapons arsenal.

Indeed, there is irrefutable evidence that Syria has been avoiding accountability and undermining assessment and data collection efforts.   Until Syria follows the requirements set forth by the OPCW organs, we must act according to the assumption that Syria still holds chemical weapons. **On the backdrop of such non-compliance, it is essential that the CWC maintains a robust verification regime which should be further strengthened in the years ahead.**

Mr. Chairperson,
Israel actively participated in the negotiations and signed the CWC in 1993, as testimony that it shares the values, norms and goals that the Convention represents and promotes. It is important to note that Israel also acceded to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, adheres to export control regimes, including the Australia Group, and traditionally supports the United Nations General Assembly CWC First Committee

resolution. We hope that others in the region who have not done so yet will join the CWC as a testament of their commitment to the norms and values it represents.

In conclusion, in the face of continued violations, we call upon the international community to stand united in ensuring accountability. An unwavering message must be sent to those who consider violating the Convention. We must remember what is at stake – our collective security.

I kindly request that this statement be designated as an official document of the Review Conference and be posted on the OPCW external server and the public website.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.