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ROMANIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR LUCIAN FĂTU PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF ROMANIA TO THE OPCW AT THE 102ND SESSION OF
THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Romania fully supports the European Union statement delivered by the Swedish presidency in the general debate, on behalf of the Member States of the EU and aligned countries. In addition, I would like to underline a few issues from the national perspective.

We are meeting at a critical juncture. Too many tragedies have occurred lately, all over the world, to be mentioned here. Any words are useless. Solidarity is all that matters in these moments. Let's not forget that it's always about the people. And all our actions should start from the premise that they must be taken into account in the first place. Here, at the OPCW, we are talking about some of these dramas whose main victims are the ones we, in fact, have to protect.

The most blatant breaches of the norm have occurred with the use of chemical weapons on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. The last report of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) reveals, once again, this cruel reality. Romania has full confidence in the expertise of the IIT, its professionalism and impartiality. Romania strongly condemns the repeated use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and shares the position, expressed by many members of this Council, that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria must be held accountable.

Furthermore, Romania is among the States Parties calling upon the Syrian Arab Republic to comply with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and cooperate with the OPCW. And we will continue to act in this regard as long as necessary. We have entered the tenth year of OPCW engagement on the Syrian chemical weapons dossier. Unfortunately, all efforts by the Technical Secretariat to clarify the Syrian initial declaration continue to be unsuccessful. The Syrian Arab Republic needs to resolve the pending issues, declare the full extent of its chemical weapons programme, and return to full compliance with the Convention.

Allow me to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Director-General Fernando Arias, and the Technical Secretariat for their efforts to uphold the norm against the use of chemical weapons and for their work in the pursuit of the elimination of these inhumane weapons. I take this opportunity to reiterate Romania's strong support for the professionalism,



impartiality, objectivity, and independence of the work of the OPCW. Romania is determined to contribute to strengthening the OPCW and decided to present its candidacy for the Chairpersonship of the Executive Council for the period May 2023-May 2024. Romania remains dedicated to delivering on the aspirations of the UN Charter, as well as the goals and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine, carried out by Russia, continues to shake the international rules-based order. Russia's military aggression against Ukraine is a serious violation of international law and the legally binding commitments. One of the main negative consequences of Russia's invasion in Ukraine in the multilateral arena is the undermining of the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture.

Our message is clear. We condemn the Russian Federation's premeditated, unjustified and unprovoked military aggression on Ukraine. We have not tired of advocating for the withdrawal of the Russian Federation from the territory of Ukraine. And we will continue to do so.

We also condemn the Russian disinformation campaigns, and, with relevance to our meeting here, regarding allegations of provocations involving the use of chemical agents in Ukraine. Such provocations, including "false flag" actions, are irresponsible and could have grave humanitarian consequences not just in this part of the world.

Let us be clear and reiterate - the use of chemical weapons, anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances, is entirely unacceptable. The absence of accountability for that use is a threat to international peace and security and may have long lasting consequences for the Chemical Weapons Convention.

This belief was also the basis of Romania's actions regarding the assassination attempt on the Russian opposition politician, Mr Alexei Navalny. Romania once again joins the Member States that urge the Russian Federation to reveal without delay the circumstances of the assassination attempt against Mr Navalny.

The current global events have underscored that preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons will remain on our agenda even though the process of destroying chemical arsenals declared to the OPCW will soon be completed. In this context, the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology will significantly enhance the capabilities and status of the OPCW as a global leader in the effort to rid the world of chemical weapons. Romania contributed to the establishment of this centre and will continue to be involved in this initiative.

Romania co-sponsors Germany's initiative on Executive Council business continuity and we will continue to support this much needed démarche.

This spring, at the Fifth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (Fifth Review Conference), the States Parties must sit at the same table and decide how to ensure the continued relevance of the Convention as a key instrument of the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime. It will also be an opportunity to achieve a common vision on countering the re-emergence of chemical weapons and safeguarding the global norm against the use of chemical weapons. Mr Chairperson, it is incumbent upon us to do our utmost to make the Fifth Review Conference a success.

I would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document and publish it on the external server and the public website of the OPCW.

Thank you.

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