

Norwegian statement at the 103rd session of the Executive Council, By H.E. Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Norway to the OPCW

Mr. Chair,

Mr. Director-General,

Distinguished Colleagues,

Norway aligns itself with the statement made by H.E. Consuelo Femenia, Permanent Representative of Spain to the OPCW, on behalf of the European Union. I would like to add the following in my national capacity.

At the 5th Review Conference in May, we took stock of the CWC by looking back at important events and developments which have taken place over the past five years. The good news is that we are near completion of the destruction of all declared chemical weapons in the world. This will be a milestone in the history of the OPCW and in global disarmament. The bad news is that a small number of States Parties blocked consensus on the adoption of a political declaration. We should, however, not let the lack of a political declaration stop us from moving forward on issues where there is positive momentum. NGO participation, industry verification, tenure policy, diversity, gender equality and mainstreaming are among these.

Mr. Chair,

It is critical that all States Parties comply with the obligation to cooperate with the OPCW and enable the Technical Secretariat to fulfil its mandate. The Syrian Arab Republic has a longstanding track record of failing to do so. Norway continues to urge the Syrian Arab Republic to undertake the measures

necessary to lift the suspension of its rights and privileges as a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

(Mr. Chair,)

The Russian Federation has yet to provide credible answers to how – and under what circumstances – Russian citizen Alexei Navalny was exposed to a Novichok agent in August 2020. The attack on Mr Navalny is a flagrant violation of the CWC and International Law. We continue to call on the Russian Federation to comply with its obligations as a State Party and to facilitate a proper investigation of this matter. We also call on Russia to stop its disinformation campaigns on chemical weapons use in Ukraine. Unfounded allegations like these are intended to sow confusion, and damage trust in the instruments of non-proliferation and disarmament. Russia's brutal warfare in Ukraine continues unabated. We condemn this warfare in the strongest possible terms. Russia's behaviour continues to undermine multilateral cooperation.

Mr. Chair,

Norway attaches great importance to the participation and involvement of civil society actors in OPCW conferences and events. They provide valuable input in terms of expertise and technical knowledge. Norway favours a review of the guidelines for the attendance and participation by NGOs wishing to take part in sessions of the Conference and Review Conferences, in order to devise clearly defined and transparent procedures based on international best practices.

Mr. Chair,

Let me conclude by reiterating Norway's confidence in the impartial and diligent work of DG Arias and the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW.

Thank you.