

**Statement of the Republic of Poland
by H.E. Ambassador Margareta Kassangana
Permanent Representative of Poland to the OPCW
at the 103rd session of the Executive Council
(The Hague, 11 - 14 July 2023)**

Mr Chairperson,

Poland fully supports the statement of the European Union delivered by the Spanish Presidency. I wish to add just a few points in my national capacity. I will limit myself to the most important matters as my full statement will be distributed in writing.

First of all, I would like to join others in congratulating H.E. Lucian Fatu of Romania on assuming the position of the new Chairperson of the Executive Council. Mr Chairperson, you can count on my delegation's full support. Let me also thank H.E. Ambassador Ziad Al Atiyah of Saudi Arabia for steering effectively the work of the Executive Council during the past year.

Mr Chairperson,

Poland welcomes the information about the end of the destruction of the US declared stockpiles of chemical weapons. We congratulate our American colleagues. This is undoubtedly an important milestone for the OPCW. Now the States Parties need to focus on making sure that there is no return to the use of chemical weapons. We cannot be complacent as there are still many challenges ahead of us, posed *inter alia* by the rapid technological changes and non-state actors. The States Parties must ensure that there is no impunity for

the use of chemical weapons and that all perpetrators are identified and held accountable. For these reasons, Poland fully supports the work of the Investigation and Identification Team. We also reiterate our call on the Syrian Arab Republic to resume full and unconditional co-operation with the OPCW, including DAT, in order to proceed with the clarification of all outstanding matters and return to the full observance of the CWC.

Mr Chairperson,

It has been more than 500 days since the Russian Federation started its barbaric aggression against Ukraine and its people, bringing senseless war, death and destruction on a scale not seen in Europe since the Second World War and threatening security and stability of the whole continent. Russia's reprehensible actions, including drastic violation of the UN Charter and the international law, war crimes and atrocities committed in Ukraine have destroyed the Russian Federation's international standing. By its own deeds, Russia has questioned its role in guarding peace and security as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, but also as a trustworthy partner at the OPCW. No wonder that almost all members of the EEG have objected to being represented by Russia in various functions falling to the Group, be it in the Review Conference, the CSP or the Executive Council, as long as Russia is waging a war against another group member. The results of relevant votes have clearly showed support and understanding of the vast majority of the States Parties for this approach.

While spreading false narratives and disinformation about the possibility of use by Ukraine of chemical weapons, Russia has failed so far to allow for a transparent, international investigation of the use of Novichok nerve agent to

assassinate Mr Alexei Navalny or of the Russia's involvement into the Novichok attack against Mr Sergei Skripal in Salisbury, UK, in 2018.

Mr Chairperson,

Like many others, Poland was disappointed that despite commendable efforts, including thorough preparatory work in the OEWG and personal engagement of the Chairperson, H. E. Ambassador Henk Cor van der Kwast, the Fifth Review Conference ended without an outcome document. It was a lost opportunity to strengthen the Convention and offer guidance for the Organisation for the years to come. However, the review process and the negotiations at the Conference itself have clearly showed a possibility of a tangible progress on many issues, including cooperation on chemical weapons dumped at sea. We support the idea of trying to use all actionable items identified during the Review Conference as a basis of further work in the EC and the CSP.

Mr Chairperson,

I would like to reiterate Poland's unwavering support for the OPCW and to the non-proliferation of chemical weapons. As stated many times before, Poland has full confidence in the professionalism and objectivity of the Technical Secretariat under the leadership of Director General, H. E. Ambassador Fernando Arias. The OPCW needs to have stable and predictable founding in order to be able to carry out its programmatic work mandated by the States Parties in a way meeting their expectations. We need to make sure that the Organization stays fit for purpose. As every year, in the autumn, Poland will be introducing a new draft of our annual UNGA resolution on the implementation of the CWC. We are open to the

idea of conducting a round of informal consultations on the draft in The Hague, as we used to do in the past.

I would kindly ask that this statement be issued as an official document of the session and placed on the OPCW public website.

Thank you for your attention.