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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 102ND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL UNDER AGENDA ITEM 6(C)

Mr Chairperson,

I. Regarding the reports by the Director-General

We have read carefully and with interest the 109th, 110th, 111th, 112th, and 113th monthly reports by the Director-General. The way these were formulated with all the deliberate insinuations is intended to portray Syria as a non-cooperating State Party, suggesting that the work of the Secretariat continues to be hampered by Syria's failure to fulfil its declaration-related obligations, as well as its obligations to cooperate with the Organisation. For the sake of time, I will keep my reply short:

1. Those who reject Syria's repeated requests to hold a round of consultations as early as possible and impose non-objective conditions on a State Party to hold that round are the ones who are hampering the continued holding of rounds of consultation between the Declaration Assessment Team and the Syrian National Authority.
2. Accusing Syria of failing to fulfil its obligations is a broad and vague accusation. Did Syria not fulfil its obligations, as acknowledged by the OPCW? We are still in the phase of consultations, and no conclusions have been reached so as to assert that Syria failed to fulfil its obligations or to cooperate, or that it has something to hide. However, if the Director-General meant the decision adopted by the Executive Council at its Ninety-Fourth Session and the decision adopted by Conference of the States Parties at its Twenty-Fifth Session, I would like to address the following question to all Council members: is Syria supposed to declare chemical weapons production and storage facilities and means of delivery that it does not possess at all?
3. The non-objective information and the escalation of accusations in the reports by the Director-General have formed a basis and pretext for known States to level accusations against Syria, becoming a fundamental part of the campaign of incitement against Syria, and providing grounds for accusing Syria of failing to cooperate with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW.



4. This approach is unprecedented in the history of the OPCW and constitutes a clear departure on the part of the Director-General from his mandate under the Convention. We hope that, in line with his mandate under the Convention, he will be an impartial and unbiased party and that he will not take sides or adopt a hostile position against a State Party.

II. Regarding the Syrian monthly reports

Syria continued to provide the Technical Secretariat, and through it the States Parties, with monthly reports, submitting five reports between October 2022 and March 2023, namely the 108th, 109th, 110th, 111th, and 112th reports. In each monthly report, Syria has clarified a great deal of important information and corrected a great deal of non-objective information contained in the reports by the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat. We hope that the Missions of the States Parties have familiarised themselves with the content of these reports.

III. Regarding the report by the Director-General on the work of the Declaration Assessment Team

The report contained a great deal of non-objective information and accusations similar to those contained in the monthly reports by the Director-General, on which many known States, in anticipation, have built false and non-objective accusations against Syria.

Syria reaffirms that it will pursue its constructive approach and unprecedented cooperation with the Technical Secretariat and that it will remain committed to fulfilling its obligations. Syria is willing to move forward, in line with the provisions of the Convention, and is ready for structured and constructive dialogue. We declare before you that Syria is ready to hold the twenty-fifth round of consultations now and we hope that some known States Parties will stop levelling accusations and anticipating the outcome of the consultations with the Technical Secretariat, encourage Syria to keep cooperating with the OPCW, ask the Technical Secretariat to hold the twenty-fifth round of consultations immediately, stop putting conditions on the holding of this round, and take Syria's rightful concerns and comments into consideration.

Finally, Syria calls on some Western States to take into account its positive and constructive attitudes and full cooperation with the OPCW and to stop turning the DAT and its reports into a tool for political pressure and blackmail against Syria.

IV. Regarding the classified briefing on the Syrian chemical dossier

Classified briefings have become another platform for implying that Syria is not cooperating and is not committed and that it is impeding the Technical Secretariat's work. Now is the time to approach the matter objectively, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and common sense, away from politicisation. The Technical Secretariat's attempt, during the recent briefing held on 8 March, to silence Syria, deprive it of its right to defend itself and refute the fabrications and false information contained in the report of the so-called Investigation and Identification Team, which lacks legitimacy, on the alleged Douma incident (2018) is the best proof of the extent of politicisation within the OPCW. It is yet another proof of the violations committed by the Technical Secretariat, under pressure from the United States and some Western States, of the provisions of the Convention and established traditions and norms which are followed at the official meetings of international organisations, including the OPCW.

V. Regarding the eighth round of inspection at the Scientific Studies and Research Centre in September 2022

Syria regrets that no mention was made of the full cooperation and facilities extended by Syria to the team, which were mentioned in the team's reports issued in March 2023, as follows:

- The inspection team managed to achieve the inspection goals. A field tour was conducted at the site, followed by an inspection in the buildings and areas chosen by the team.
- During the inspection, the team did not notice any activities that are inconsistent with the obligations of the inspected State Party under the Convention and any other relevant obligations, such as the OPCW Policy-Making Organs decisions and United Nations Security Council resolutions.
- Issues requiring further attention: none.
- Uncertainties: none.
- Cooperation of the State Party: during the inspection, the State Party provided assistance, access, and support, including administrative and logistical support, as requested by the inspection team. There was no delay during the inspection period.

Is this not proof enough of Syria's cooperation and commitment? This question is addressed to all States Parties. Can Syria be cooperating with one team and hampering the work of another, as claimed by the Technical Secretariat?

I thank you and I request that this statement be considered an official document of the 102nd Session of the Executive Council and posted on the OPCW's public website and on Catalyst.

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