



Embassy of Finland
The Hague

Statement by Finland

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Mr. Chair, Mr. Director-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finland aligns itself with the statement made by Spain on behalf of the European Union. In addition, we wish to highlight a few issues from a national perspective.

We would like to thank H.E. Ambassador Lucian Fătu of Romania for his leadership and commitment as the Chair of the Executive Council.

We also extend our sincere gratitude to the Director-General Fernando Arias and his staff for their dedication and determined efforts in supporting the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We have full confidence in the expertise, professionalism, impartiality, and independence of the Secretariat. Finland's support for the Convention and the work of the OPCW is unwavering.

Mr. Chair,

The international arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation architecture is at a crossroads. Breaches of norms of disarmament and non-proliferation during the past few years have put the system under considerable pressure. Each violation of the existing normative framework is dangerous, as it decreases predictability and undermines trust -

the building blocks of multilateralism and a functioning rules-based international order. The Chemical Weapons Convention is and will remain a fundamental component of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We as the States Parties have a duty to uphold it.

Finland strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons in all circumstances, by anyone, anywhere, and at any time. The use of chemical weapons undermines international peace and security, constitutes a violation of international law, and can amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We reiterate our resolute condemnation of the Syrian regime's repeated use of chemical weapons. The lack of progress and cooperation by Syria is regrettable. Syria must immediately comply with its obligations under the CWC and relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and fully cooperate with the OPCW, including with all mechanisms established by the Policy-Making Organs.

We restate once more our deep concern for the lack response by the Russian Federation to international calls for a thorough and transparent investigation into the assassination attempt of the Russian opposition politician Mr. Alexei Navalny. We repeat our request for the Russian Federation to provide substantial answers to the questions posed by 45 States Parties in October 2021 in the framework of Art. IX and, to disclose without further delay the circumstances of the assassination attempt against Mr. Navalny.

Finland emphasizes that impunity for the use of chemical weapons cannot be tolerated. We continue to support collective efforts to ensure accountability for perpetrators of chemical attacks, including through the International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

Mr. Chair,

Finland condemns the unjustified and illegal war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. The Russian invasion of a sovereign country is a violation of international law, including the UN Charter.

Finland firmly supports Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as its right to self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter. The Russian Federation must immediately cease its military actions, withdraw its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and respect Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty within its internationally recognised borders.

We are concerned about the reports concerning the alleged use of riot control agents by Russia as a method of warfare, and recall that such use is prohibited under Article I of the Convention.

Mr Chair,

The OPCW needs adequate, predictable resources to implement its mandate. Under the challenging financial situation, a delicate balance has to be struck between ensuring the necessary funding for mandated activities, and the need for austerity measures and budgetary discipline. We trust that the biennial budget outcome achieved is mindful of this reality. In this context, it is crucial that States Parties meet their obligations and pay their assessed contributions in full and on time.

In addition, human resources, retention of expertise, and knowledge management require our attention. Finland welcomes and supports continued efforts to amend the OPCW Tenure Policy to improve the Technical Secretariat's ability to meet operational requirements and to fulfil its mandate.

To conclude, I wish to stress our appreciation and strong support to the Director-General's efforts towards a more diverse and inclusive Secretariat. We welcome and support further efforts towards gender equality in the Organization, including through enhanced gender

mainstreaming in all areas of the Secretariat's work, and look forward to working together to this end.

I kindly request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session and posted on the external server and public website.

Thank you, Mr Chair.