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RUSSIAN FEDERATION

**REQUEST FOR CIRCULATION OF A DOCUMENT AT THE TWENTY-EIGHTH
SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

The Russian Federation considers this new initiative of the United States of America and its allies to be another serious step in a series of actions aimed at undermining the United Nations Charter, which we believe remains the cornerstone of international peace and security and the international weapons of mass destruction disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. The Russian Federation believes that if approved, the document will deliver a death blow to the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention) as it was originally conceived by its founding States, which include the Russian Federation.

The authors of the document, as usual without any facts or evidence, accuse the Syrian Arab Republic of concealing some chemical weapons and even using them. These trumped-up allegations are used to initiate the collective measures against Syria under Article XII of the Convention.

In this regard, the Russian Federation would like to draw the attention of the States Parties to the fact that that any collective actions under Article XII of the Convention should be undertaken strongly “in conformity with international law”. It is obvious that this draft decision does not meet this requirement and goes far beyond the mandate of the Convention. It contradicts international law and constitutes an attempt by the United States of America and its allies to substitute the law with some rules written by themselves in their own interests.

The Russian Federation also would like to remind the States Parties that in accordance with Article VII of the United Nations Charter, it is the prerogative of the United Nations Security Council to make decisions on measures that may include complete or partial disruption of economic relations. The OPCW has neither the authority nor the mechanisms to introduce or monitor the implementation of such decisions. More importantly, the Security Council does not impose restrictions aimed at the economic strangulation of a country simply to please the United States of America; according to the United Nations Charter, sanctions shall be undertaken to maintain or restore international peace and security.

Meanwhile, the accusations that the Syrian Arab Republic continues to possess military chemical capabilities are completely baseless. Syria fully implemented its obligations as prescribed in United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), eliminated its military chemical programme under the strict control of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW (the Secretariat) and with the unprecedented support of some States Parties to the Convention. This fact was confirmed in 2016 in the official documents of the Executive Council (EC-81/DG.5, dated 25 January 2016) and the Conference of the States Parties (C-22/4, dated 29 November 2017).

The Russian Federation would like to underline that any sanctions regime initiated by the United Nations Security Council provides certain humanitarian exemptions, as well as specific

mechanisms for their implementation. Such provisions are aimed at avoiding any negative consequences of the restrictive collective measures for the civilian population and the operation of humanitarian organisations.

To the contrary, the United States of America insists on imposing sanctions against the Syrian Arab Republic on the basis of Security Council document S/2006/853*, which reflects the sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and contains a comprehensive list of chemical and biological items, materials, equipment, goods, and technologies related to weapons of mass destruction programmes. These sanctions are the most severe sectorial restrictive measures the United Nations Security Council has ever imposed on any country; the chemicals included in the list have broad application in agricultural industry as well as in medicine. Thus, a comprehensive ban on supplies of these chemical products will seriously deteriorate the already dire humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Moreover, the document provides the possibility for the States Parties to introduce additional restrictions under pressure from NATO and countries in the European Union, which threaten to implement secondary punitive measures against those willing to cooperate with Syria. All of this turns the suggestion of the regime of the United States of America into a full economic blockade of the Syrian Arab Republic. For example, the United States and its allies can use the document to intercept vessels (first of all in the Mediterranean region), and inspect and seize their cargo if a violation of their unilateral restrictions is suspected.

It is necessary to keep in mind that this draft decision would also empower the Director-General of the Secretariat. He will be able to designate the States Parties allegedly guilty of violations of the Convention or of using chemical weapons, and subsequently share classified information about their export/import operations with the Executive Council of the OPCW—as we understand it, in order to impose on these States similar sectorial sanctions. These restrictions may include any chemical products—from medical ingredients to fertilizers, petrochemicals, etc.

In summary, it is evident that the United States of America and its allies are trying to empower the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention with the exclusive powers of the United Nations Security Council, and to provide the Secretariat with the additional functions of the United Nations Security Council Sanctions Committees.

The goal of all these endeavours is obvious: to finalise the transformation of the OPCW into an obedient instrument that only serves the interests of NATO and European Union countries and their allies.

The Russian Federation believes that this initiative is contrary to international law and the United Nations Charter and goes far beyond the mandates of the Convention and the OPCW.

For that reason, the Russian Federation urges all States Parties to vote against this draft decision.