

**LITHUANIA**  
**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR NEILAS TANKEVIČIUS**  
**PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA TO**  
**THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION**  
**OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,  
Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Lithuania aligns itself fully with the statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Marjoline van Deelen, on behalf of the European Union. Allow me to add the following elements in my national capacity.

Lithuania commends the leadership of OPCW Director-General Fernando Arias and expresses its full trust in the effective and impartial work of the Technical Secretariat in implementing its functions under the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”). Let me equally extend the sincere reassurances of our delegation’s full support and appreciation to H.E. Ambassador Suljuk Mustansar Tarar of Pakistan, Chairperson of the Twenty-Eighth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

Mr. Chairman,

We continue to witness the permanent member of the UN Security Council, Russia, brutally and openly violating international peace and security, and the rules-based global order. We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia’s deliberate and unprovoked war against Ukraine and demand that Russia immediately and unconditionally ceases its military actions and withdraws all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine.

Even in the times like these, when global peace and security situation continues to face enormous challenges, it is important to remain resolute, and continue our efforts towards the world free of chemical weapons.

Lithuania will continue to work towards ensuring that there is no impunity for those responsible for heinous attacks using chemical weapon anywhere in the world.

Russian Federation has violated the Convention by using chemical weapons in the assassination attempt on Alexei Navalny in 2020 and in Salisbury in 2018. Reports from different sources also indicate riot control agents may have been used repeatedly by Russian armed forces in combat operations against Ukrainian forces. Moreover, unlawful military attacks against civilian infrastructure in Ukraine greatly increases the risk of accidents involving industrial chemicals.

We also note that after two and a half years of efforts from the Secretariat, Syria finally accepted the convening of the 25th round of consultations, with the full Declaration Assessment Team, as proposed. Still much more needs to be done. Syrian authorities have to fully cooperate with the OPCW and its investigations on the use of chemical weapons in the conflict, including the attack in Douma, as well as on the completion of the dismantling of its chemical weapons programme.

In this light it is important that Secretariat continues efforts to sustain and build its capabilities to investigate, including through the further development of tools and methodologies. We welcome the fact that Centre for Chemistry and Technology is an additional way to keep pace with scientific progress.

The Organisation must also continue to deepen its focus on prevention, addressing new and existing threats, and increasing international cooperation, assistance, and protection. Therefore, a smooth approval of 2024-2025 budget is needed, as well as payment of assessed contributions in full and on time is necessary for effective functioning of the OPCW.

And a few points on the future. Full and effective participation of women in global disarmament fora, including the OPCW, is essential to fostering an inclusive environment and enriching the outputs of our collective work. Flexibility on tenure is critical for the Organisation to retain specialised institutional capacity for longer periods, therefore the discussion needs to be continued as also the work of newly established Working Group on Geographical Representation. In all our work it is important to find a way to ensure a more structured and systematic interaction with civil society.

Mr Chairperson,

Last week in New York, during the 78<sup>th</sup> UNGA session, the resolution on Cooperative measures to assess and increase awareness of environmental effects related to waste originating from chemical munitions dumped at sea was again adopted by consensus. The renewal of this year contains the encouragement to build upon the discussions held at the Review Conferences of the Chemical Weapons Convention of 2018 and 2023, it also invites the Secretary General of the UN to provide a global review of available technical means of minimization of potential environmental effects related to the waste originating from chemical munitions dumped at sea, including through their elimination (new element). And, importantly, it invites Secretary General to further explore the possibility of establishing a database that could contain relevant and voluntarily shared information.

Moreover – on Thursday, 30 November 2023, during the lunch break, a side-event on the sea dumped chemical weapons is organised by the delegations of Germany, Lithuania and Poland in Room Oceania 2. We are very happy that the number of interested parties is increasing every year.

I ask that this statement be designated an official document of this session of the Conference and posted on both the external server and the public website.

I thank you, Mr Chairperson.

- - - o - -