



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 Belgium on behalf of the European Union. In addition, we wish to highlight a few issues from a national perspective.

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

We also extend our sincere gratitude to Director-General Fernando Arias and his staff. We reiterate our full confidence in the expertise, professionalism and impartiality of the Secretariat.

Mr. Chair,

The current global security environment is challenging for the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. In an unpredictable and dynamic security context, it is of utmost importance to uphold and respect the norm against the use of chemical weapons. 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 collective duty to uphold it. We are pleased that the Secretariat is monitoring all relevant situations, including in Gaza, and any allegations of use of

chemical weapons that could arise, and stands ready to assist, in accordance with the Convention.

Mr. Chair,

Finland welcomes the fourth report of the Investigation and Identification Team on 22 February, which identifies the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) as the perpetrator of the chemical weapons attack in Marea, Syria on 1st September 2015. We strongly condemn the use of chemical weapons in all circumstances, by anyone, anywhere, and at any time. I would like to express Finland's full support and appreciation for the professional, impartial and independent work carried out by the IIT. This report is yet another reminder of the importance and relevance of IIT's work and capabilities in helping States Parties ensure that there is no impunity for chemical weapons use by state or non-state actors. As a member of the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons Finland is committed to ensuring full accountability of those responsible for the use of chemical weapons.

Finland also notes other Syria-related developments, including the latest report of the Fact-Finding Mission of 22 February, and the resumption of consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team and Syria. Finland recalls that the Syrian declaration remains inaccurate and incomplete, and that the UN and OPCW have independently attributed the chemical weapons use to Syrian regime on nine occasions. Syria must immediately comply with all its obligations under the CWC and relevant UN Security Council resolutions by fully declaring and destroying its chemical weapons program as well as by fully cooperating with the OPCW.

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.

Two years into Russia's full-scale war of aggression, Finland reiterates its unwavering support to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as its right to self-defence. Russia 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 very concerned by increasing number of information sources stating that Russia may be using Riot Control Agents as a method of warfare at the frontlines in Ukraine. Regrettably, Russia has not provided adequate answers when asked about the use of Riot Control Agents pursuant to Article IX, paragraph 2 of the Convention.

Finland is saddened and outraged by the death of Mr. Alexei Navalny while imprisoned in the Russian Federation, for which the ultimate responsibility lies with the Russian authorities. We join the call for a full, credible and transparent investigation into the circumstances of Mr. Navalny's death.

We reiterate our deep concern for the lack of sufficient 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 in 2020. We once again urge the Russian Federation to fulfil its obligation to provide answers to the questions posed under Article IX paragraph 2.

Mr Chair,

We welcome the progress made on all actionable items following the Fifth Review Conference. The adoption of the Action Plan to improve geographical diversity within the Secretariat is a positive step towards a more diverse and inclusive Secretariat. Furthermore, we wish to express our appreciation and strong support to the Director-General's 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.

To conclude, we wish to underline the importance of engaging all relevant stakeholders in the OPCW work. In this regard, we welcome and support the on-going work facilitated by Ecuador and Germany towards enhanced interaction with civil society.

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

Thank you, Mr Chair.