



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF AUSTRALIA, CANADA, AND NEW ZEALAND (CANZ)  
AT THE 105<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

**\*AGENDA ITEM 14: ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Chair,

Thank you for giving me the floor. I have the honour of addressing the Council today on behalf of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.

In the past year, we have successfully advanced several long-standing organisational governance issues in the OPCW, including tenure policy, geographical representation, gender equality, and civil society engagement. This week, we have yet another opportunity to ensure the efficient functioning of the Organisation.

At the end of last year, we adopted a decision allowing for greater tenure policy flexibility. The decision, titled “Amendment of the OPCW Tenure Policy” (C-28/DEC.10, dated 30 November), will enable the Secretariat to fulfil its mandate and retain the relevant skills and expertise to respond to new challenges. We look forward to receiving Director-General Arias’ first annual report on the impact of this decision.

Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, like many other States Parties, envision an Organisation that accurately reflects the wide geographic spread of the countries which make up its membership. For this reason, we were pleased to support the “Action Plan on Geographical Representation” (C-28/DEC.11, dated 30 November 2023). We welcome the updates provided to the Council by the Secretariat on its implementation.

As the world prepares to mark International Women’s Day on 8 March, we also welcome the progress made by the Secretariat towards gender mainstreaming its work and encourage all States Parties to support this process. In this vein, we welcome the Secretariat’s *Roadmap on Workforce Gender Equality 2024–2026* and look forward to the opportunity to discuss it in greater detail.

Finally, we thank Germany and Ecuador for their leadership on improving engagement with civil society and welcome the insights provided at the latest consultation held on 22 February 2024. Ridding the world of chemical weapons requires structured and systematic engagement between the OPCW, States Parties, industry, the scientific community, academia, and civil society. This will support our work and ensure that the decisions we make are robust and credible.

It has been a year of considerable progress on these matters, and we thank the Director-General and his excellent team for all their efforts. It is now up to States Parties to ensure that we do not lose momentum.

I kindly ask that this CANZ statement be considered as an official-series document of the 105<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Council and be posted on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you, Chair.

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