



## REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

### STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JOŽEF DROFENIK, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SLOVENIA TO THE OPCW AT THE 105TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

#### **Agenda item 7 (c) – Elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme**

Mr. Chairperson, Director-General, distinguished colleagues,

Slovenia fully subscribes to the statements made on behalf of the European Union. I would like to offer the following additional remarks:

Firstly, our warm thanks to the Director-General Arias and his teams for their hard work on this file. We're pleased that some progress could be achieved since last October – notably with the resumption of full fledged DAT consultations. It's encouraging that, as a result of this resumed cooperation, Syria has submitted two amendments to its declaration, and three hitherto open issues could be closed.

Nonetheless, many very serious questions pertaining to Syria's chemical weapons programme remain unanswered – such as indications of undeclared chemical weapons production at several sites, and the issue of large quantities of chemical weapons agents and munitions, the fate of which remains unverified.

Once again, we call on Syria to fully cooperate with the OPCW, including by providing unfettered access to sites, documents and people needed to resolve all outstanding issues.

We welcome the fourth report of the IIT as another important step towards accountability for chemical weapons use. Sadly, it confirmed that our fears of the spread of chemical weapons use by non-state actors were justified. Even more so, since the report refers to a pattern of use of sulphur mustard by ISIL in the region and to explicit acceptance of chemical weapons as a permissible form of combat by this group.

I reaffirm Slovenia's resolute condemnation of the use of chemical weapons anywhere and by anyone.

We must also heed Director-General's warnings that production of some chemical weapons is becoming more difficult to detect and perhaps impossible to prevent. But I see hope in the development of chemical forensics, which allows us to trace chemicals back to their manufacturers. Ensuring accountability will remain key for deterrence and prevention in a situation where our goal of a world free from chemical weapons remains elusive. We must spare no effort to achieve it.

The IIT is one of the best tools available in this regard, and we look forward to seeing the knowledge and capabilities of the OPCW to investigate chemical weapons use, no matter where and by whom, further developed in the future.

I ask that this statement be considered as an official document, and posted on Catalyst and the OPCW public website.

Thank you.