



Statement by North Macedonia

H.E. Ambassador Beti JACHEVA, Permanent Representative

106th Executive Council of the OPCW - The Hague, 9-12 July 2024

Agenda item 5 - General debate

Mr. Chairperson, Mr. Director-General, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

North Macedonia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. On this occasion, I would like to highlight the following points in my national capacity.

Allow me to first express sincere gratitude and to reiterate our appreciation to H.E. Ambassador Lucian Fătu of Romania on successful completion of his chairmanship of the Executive Council in the past year. North Macedonia also wishes to welcome Ambassador H.E. Ambassador Andrés Teran Parral of Ecuador and extend our full support.

We also extend the appreciation and reiterate our full support to the Director General, Ambassador Fernando Arias and also to the Technical Secretariat for their professionalism, impartiality and expertise in implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We repeat that the use or threat of use of chemical weapons by anyone be it a State or a non-State actor, anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances is unacceptable and goes against the obligations we all undertook under the Convention. Therefore, North Macedonia welcomes the continued confirmation by the Director-General that the Secretariat is monitoring all relevant situations, and any allegations of use of chemical weapons that could arise, and stands ready to assist if requested, in accordance with the Convention.

We continue to condemn in strongest terms the unprovoked and unjustified, and still continuing, Russian aggression over Ukraine which constitutes flagrant violation of the UN Charter obligations and international law. We reiterate our unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and its inherent right of self-defence against the Russian aggression. Russia will be held accountable for its war of aggression and all the destruction it causes.

We remain concerned about the growing number of reported use of riot control agents by Russian Federation as a method of warfare, as well as alleged use of choking agent chloropicrin against Ukrainian soldiers. Such use is prohibited under the Convention and that is why we have joined Germany on behalf of 12 states parties requesting clarification of the situation related to these reports. We urge the Russian Federation to address these reports and provide answers.

We commend the continuous efforts by the OPCW and TS regarding elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme and regret the complete lack of progress: more than ten years after Syria's initial declaration, numerous and important questions remain unanswered. We again join the others in calls to Syrian Arab Republic to immediately comply with its obligations under the Convention and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, including calls to fully declare and destroy its chemical weapons.

We also welcome the ongoing work steered by Germany and Costa Rica on enhanced interaction with Civil Society and its meaningful and broadest possible participation in the Conference of States Parties.

We also welcome the efforts initiated by the Director General to start looking at possible risks and opportunities that Artificial Intelligence (AI) could potentially bring to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as deepening of Organisations' understanding of this fast developing technology.

I would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document of the 106th Executive Council and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you for your attention.