



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR NICOLE SHAMPAINÉ PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AT THE SIXTY-SIXTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

First, I'd like to thank the Director-General for his remarks. We appreciate his insights regarding the OPCW's efforts during this critical period of transition for Syria.

With all the challenges Syrians are facing today, it is regrettable that they are also inheriting the longstanding issue of the Assad regime's undeclared chemical weapons program.

We are encouraging Syria to engage in genuine cooperation with the OPCW to do what the Assad regime never did: resolve the OPCW's outstanding questions related to the development, possession, and use of chemical weapons, and see that the Assad regime's chemical weapons program is fully declared and verifiably destroyed once and for all.

But this is not simply a task for the OPCW Technical Secretariat and Syria. It is also a task for us, as States Parties.

Colleagues, it is time for all of us to get back to the core of our mission.

We cannot genuinely discuss a world free of chemical weapons without addressing the very real proliferation risk posed by un-declared chemical weapons programs.

Praising so-called constructive engagement and progress for years where there was none took us backwards in this regard, and we hope that the dangers of this lack of accountability are now clear to all.

We should all be unified, as States Parties, standing together in opposition to violations of the CWC.

We should all be on one team, taking seriously reports and technical findings of the OPCW Technical Secretariat that point to violations of the CWC.

The United Nations and the OPCW concluded the Assad regime used sarin and chlorine barrel bombs repeatedly after Syria acceded to the Convention. Yet it never declared these weapons. Nor did the Assad regime provide explanations for samples suggesting the presence of other, undeclared, chemical warfare agents.

Yet, as recently as two weeks ago during the Conference of the States Parties, representatives of the Assad regime claimed Syria's declaration to the OPCW was complete. Russia also repeatedly echoed this falsehood.

Now is the opportunity for Syria to make a different choice. And it is an opportunity for us to speak in unison in support of real progress. The United States stands ready to assist the OPCW in practical ways and we call on others to do the same.

Thank You.