



**STATEMENT BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AT THE SIXTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Colleagues,

As we all saw during last week's Executive Council meeting, there is considerable unity behind supporting Syria's efforts to identify and destroy any remnants of the Assad regime's chemical weapons program once and for all.

Eliminating the Assad regime's chemical weapons program is one step among many in support of a better future for the people of Syria. President Trump outlined his clear vision of a prosperous Middle East, and peace among neighbors, including Israel and Syria, is a critical component of this vision.

The United States supports a stable Syria at peace with itself and its neighbors. Regarding the recent events in Syria, Secretary Rubio noted that we are very concerned about the current state of affairs. The United States did not support recent Israeli strikes. All parties must step back and engage in meaningful dialogue. We are engaging diplomatically with Israel and Syria at the highest levels both to address the present crisis and to reach a lasting agreement between the two sovereign states.

When it comes to the issue at hand today, from the Convention it is quite clear that the OPCW does not have a general remit when it comes to conventional strikes that may occur in a given conflict situation. The United States believes, however, that the safety and security of the OPCW mission

in Syria and those supporting them is of paramount importance. A safe and secure environment is critical for the OPCW teams to conduct their mission, including the preservation of evidence and records at various CW-related sites and facilities that are also essential to accountability efforts.

The United States will continue to work together with the Technical Secretariat and States Parties to advance President Trump's vision and support the Syrian people in their efforts to move forward and rebuild.

Thank you.