

Netherlands Statement Executive Council 111th Session.

Agenda item 6(c)

Mr Chairperson,

For more than a decade, the Assad regime systematically undermined the Chemical Weapons Convention by failing to comply with its obligations. Upon the collapse of that regime, the Syrian people were left with the daunting task of identifying and destroying all remaining elements of the chemical weapons programme.

Under its new leadership, Syria has embarked on a transformative path. The transitional government has demonstrated its commitment to dismantling the remnants of Assad's chemical weapons programme. The international community has a responsibility to support Syria in this endeavour.

In recognition of this responsibility, the Netherlands has on two occasions since the fall of the previous regime voluntarily contributed €500,000 to the OPCW Trust Fund for Syria Missions. We continue to support the cooperation between the OPCW and the Syrian authorities.

We thank the Technical Secretariat, and in particular the Office of Special Missions, for its continuous engagement, regular reporting and briefings. We also thank the Syrian Arab Republic and Ambassador Katoub for the commitment shown and for the open and constructive communication.

Today, Syria is facing serious challenges and certain setbacks are bound to happen. We encourage the Syrian authorities to complete its investigation into the handling of 75 cylinders in the

Aleppo region and to share the results. It is now time to find a way forward.

Progress is rarely linear, but what is most crucial is the commitment. Let us work together to chart a path towards a better future for Syria – a future in which Syria is indeed free of chemical weapons.