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STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL UNDER AGENDA ITEM 9(D) – ADJUSTMENT TO THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S GROSS SALARY

1. I will leave the Organisation in approximately four months' time when my second term expires, upon entry on duty of my successor.
2. If this were not the case, and I were to remain longer in this position, I would have most probably stepped out of the room during the discussion under this agenda item. That not being the case, I wish to submit to the Council the following elements, which I consider relevant, for the exercise of your decision-making authority, that may have consequences for the future of the Organisation.
3. The existing framework stipulating the terms of appointment of the Director-General was decided by the Conference of the States Parties at its First Special Session in 2002, 24 years ago. And the salary of the Director-General has been adjusted periodically since then, by consensus, without any difficulty. That Conference decision provided that the salary of the Director-General would be adjusted by the Council, to keep it in line with those of other executive heads of the United Nations system.
4. In concrete terms, for over two decades, the salary of the Director-General of the OPCW has always used as a basis the salary of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which is headquartered in New York. It is worth noting that, presently, the Administrator of the UNDP receives a salary which is 16.5% higher than the salary of the OPCW Director-General, since the post adjustment for New York is much higher than for The Hague. The fact is that the actual net salary of the Director-General of the OPCW has been effectively frozen since 2024.
5. With the present figures, included in the draft decision submitted to you, the actual net salary of the Director-General will remain exactly the same in 2026 as in 2024 and 2025. This means that the adoption of the Draft Decision tabled under this item of the agenda does not entail any increase in the pay received by the Director-General, as it will be the same for the third consecutive year. This is the result of a decision adopted by the United Nations and, as you are aware, our framework follows what is agreed upon by the United Nations International Civil Service Commission.
6. I think this is the appropriate time to briefly comment on the functioning of the system at the United Nations, which we follow.



7. On 30 December, the Fifth Committee recommended to the United Nations General Assembly the adoption of the resolution related to the revised salary scale, on a “no-loss/no-gain” basis, for the professional and higher categories (P and D) of United Nations staff. The General Assembly adopted the resolution on 30 December, approving the new salaries. The General Assembly consists of 193 States, including the 41 States Parties of the Executive Council of the OPCW. This means that all of you have already participated in the positive resolution by the General Assembly adopted last December about the salaries, which is the reference for the OPCW.
8. On this basis, in 2024, 2025 and 2026 the net remuneration of United Nations staff at the professional and higher level will remain the same, which means no decrease and no increase. In other words, the purchasing power of OPCW professional staff salaries in The Hague has remained flat since 2024, notwithstanding a steady creep of inflation averaging 2.5% in 2024 and 2025, and which remains to be seen in 2026.
9. The OPCW is an Organisation that delivers concrete results through, inter alia, a set number of programmed activities, approved by the Member States through the annual Programme and Budget. These activities are very well defined, and include:
 - (a) more than 200 annual industry inspections;
 - (b) a set number of chemical demilitarisation-related inspections (the so-called old and abandoned chemical weapons inspections);
 - (c) international cooperation programmes (conferences, workshops, seminars, fellowships, etc.);
 - (d) technical assistance visits; and
 - (e) other types of specific activities.
10. The Centre for Chemistry and Technology built by the Secretariat, and inaugurated in May 2023, is just another illustration of the concrete results the Organisation has delivered, for the benefit of the Member States. The Centre was built at the Secretariat’s initiative and was its response to the decisions adopted by the Conference and the Executive Council calling for the Secretariat to keep pace with the developments in science and technology, and to remain fit for purpose. The design, financing, and construction of this building, which was finished respecting the timeline and the budget set from the start while in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, demanded major efforts and many extra hours of work for numerous Secretariat staff members, including the Director-General.
11. The position of the Director-General requires from the holder a high-quality and broad professional background. Moreover, it demands from the incumbent full dedication, inside and outside of the office, well beyond regular office hours. The Director-General has been elected by all of you. He represents the entire Organisation and is the Chief Administrative Officer of the Secretariat, responsible for a team of more than 500 personnel and an annual budget of more than 80 million euros. The remuneration of the Director-General is now on the table for the Council to decide, not for it to be increased, but to be maintained, without change for the third consecutive year. Not adopting this decision would for technical reasons mean a decrease of the Director-General’s salary.

12. For 2026, the salaries of the professional and higher positions (D and P positions) at the OPCW have been automatically updated, according to the “no-loss/no-gain” principle, following the United Nations system, pursuant to our Staff Regulations as decided by the Conference of the States Parties. If the remuneration of the Director-General does not follow suit, it would be a discrimination between the Director-General and the rest of the D and P staff, whose salaries have been automatically maintained.
13. If the decision under consideration of the Council is not adopted, it would also be an unexpected welcome for the new Director-General, and also an unusual farewell to the incumbent Director-General, who has been working for all of you, in a loyal way, with full integrity and full dedication for nearly eight years. The decision belongs to this Council.
14. If you vote in favour, it will mean a continuity with what has been happening for more than 20 years, in line with what the General Assembly of the United Nations decided last December. If you vote against, it will mean a significant departure from what has been done in the past, that will create a dangerous precedent that could start weakening the Organisation.
15. I thank you for your attention.

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