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CHILE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JUAN MARTABIT PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF CHILE TO THE OPCW AT THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF
THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairman,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates of the States Parties,

I have the pleasure of joining those who preceded me in welcoming you and congratulating you on your election to the Chair of this Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. Your broad professional experience and well-known diplomatic qualities guarantee us – as they have in the recent past – that under your leadership this Conference will come to a successful conclusion. You well know that you have our support and cooperation.

I should also like to recognise here the able and effective work of your predecessor, Ambassador Peter Goosen, of South Africa, who successfully chaired the last Session.

On 27 September, this Organisation took one of the most important decisions of the 16 short years of its existence, which is leading to the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons after the appalling use of them in that country had been verified and roundly condemned at international level.

Verification of the destruction of those weapons is, without doubt, a tremendous challenge for the OPCW, both because of the magnitude of the task and because of the ambitious timetables envisaged for conclusion of each of its stages – all this in the framework of the exceptional circumstances happening in that country.

As a Member of the Executive Council, Chile approved that decision, as it did the decision which we adopted on 15 November on the requirements and intermediate deadlines for the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons and the facilities for producing them. We did this in the belief that it was necessary to take advantage of the opportunity which diplomacy has given us to move forward towards our common goal of removing these weapons of mass destruction from the world.

The decisions taken by the OPCW this year, Security Council Resolution 2118 (2013), and the previous political agreements that made them possible, reaffirm the vital role that multilateralism and of the international legal instruments have to play in the peaceful



resolution of conflicts and, consequently, in achieving on reliable bases international peace and security.

Now come the most complicated stages in this process. That is why it is essential that the States Parties involved continue to work together – as they have been doing up until now – and that the problems be resolved in a constructive spirit, while trying to maintain the culture of consensus in the Organisation. Here, the Syrian Arab Republic bears a unique responsibility.

Given the size of the task before us, we appeal to those in a position to do so to contribute, financially or in-kind, to the tasks which have to be completed in the coming months.

Universality of the Convention is essential if we are to achieve its objectives and purpose, as was recalled in the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement and China. Therefore, we welcome the adherence of the Republic of Somalia to this treaty, just as we welcome the decision taken along the same lines by the Syrian Arab Republic.

While we praise the work of the Technical Secretariat in promoting the universal application of the Convention, we repeat our conviction that there is no justification whatever for not adhering to it.

Although we are now with 190 members, approaching our target of universality, we appeal once more to those countries that have not yet done so to join the Convention, with neither delays nor conditions. Frankly, in this day and age, nothing justifies not doing so.

Despite significant progress, we must continue working to achieve the core objective of the Convention, which is nothing less than the complete destruction of all categories of chemical weapons, and preventing them from re-emerging in the hands either of States or of non-States Parties.

While recognising the efforts being made by possessor States to fulfil their obligations under the Convention and the decisions adopted by this Conference at its Eighteenth Session, we call upon them to redouble their efforts so that the task may be completed in the shortest time possible. Complete destruction of chemical arsenals is vital to the credibility and integrity of the Convention.

It was precisely this effort that the Organisation has been making to eradicate chemical weapons from the world that the Norwegian Nobel Committee had in mind when awarding it the Nobel Peace Prize. We think that this award, well deserved, by the way, and about which we are delighted, is another vote of confidence in the ability of the OPCW to take on the challenge set before it. We shall have to live up to what is expected of us.

The successes of the Organisation that are now being recognised would not have been possible without the serious, effective leadership of its Director-General and the dedicated work – conducted almost always in silence and on occasion in dangerous circumstances – of the staff of the Technical Secretariat. Our congratulations are extended to them all.

The capacity and vision with which Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü has led this Organisation, even in tasks as complex as those engendered by verification of chemical disarmament in

Syria, is what moves us to give firm support to the recommendation that he continue in his post for a new mandate.

While the Draft Programme and Budget for next year envisages an increase in States Parties' contributions and certain activities that were important to us have had to be postponed, this delegation approves the Programme and Budget, aware that it meets the need to carry out verification of the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons, an objective shared by everyone.

Having said that, we stress the importance of maintaining a balance among the different programmes which make up the budget. International cooperation is one of the pillars of the Convention, and we call for progress in implementing the decision which we adopted on this matter at our Sixteenth Session, in order to achieve a full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI of the Convention.

Having said that, we stress the need to look for greater efficiency in the use of the resources that the States Parties make available to the Organisation. While there has been progress, we believe that there still exist both room for continuing to move forward, and methods to help us do so.

Finally, Mr Chairman, it is important not to let urgent matters lead us to forget the other tasks and objectives which we have set for the future. In the same way, we must continue our work with an eye to the road map agreed at the Third Review Conference, and bearing in mind that all the provisions of the Convention strengthen each other mutually.

We would be obliged if this statement be considered as an official document of this Conference.

Many thanks.

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