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RUSSIAN FEDERATION

**STATEMENT BY MIKHAIL BABICH PLENIPOTENTIARY ENVOY OF THE
PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE VOLGA FEDERAL DISTRICT
AND CHAIRMAN OF THE STATE COMMISSION FOR CHEMICAL DISARMAMENT
AT THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairman,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

We welcome you, Mr Chairman to this important post and express our confidence that during this session meaningful and balanced decisions will be made to strengthen the authority and integrity of the Convention, as well as to improve the effectiveness of the Organisation's work.

The OPCW is steadily approaching the eventual achievement of one of its most important goals, which is to destroy the existing stockpiles of chemical weapons. As one of the countries that stood at the origins of the Chemical Weapons Convention Russia believed and continues to believe that the main goal for all States Parties is to rid the world of the danger of use of one of the most inhumane methods of warfare.

Currently, the Russian Federation is making a most important contribution towards a prompt attainment of this goal by a consistent and continuous increase in the pace and quantity of the destruction of chemical weapons while strictly observing the safety rules relating to the population and the environment. Real progress has been made in this area: as of 30 November 2013, about 30,900 tons of chemical agents, or 77% of the entire stockpile of chemical weapons were destroyed. The level of 31,000 tons, or 77,6%, is expected to be exceeded by the end of this year.

Destruction capacities are being increased. Thus, on 6 November 2013, systematisation with live agents of another train began in Maradykovsky, which will make it possible to destroy complex munitions.

In December 2013, as planned, systematisation with live agents of another train will start at the seventh and last chemical weapon destruction facility in Kyzner, the Udmurdt Republic, which is necessary to complete the whole process of chemical weapons destruction in the Russian Federation.

The results obtained testify to Russia's commitment to fulfil its obligations, as well as to its readiness to overcome serious financial, economic, organisational and technological



difficulties and to observe stricter environmental requirements. Notwithstanding the stricter requirements to enhance safe operation of the chemical weapons destruction facilities, the growing complexity of technological solutions employed to destroy complex munitions (consisting of explosive components and chemical agents which implies higher costs of the process), and the expiry of the service life of the facilities' process and infrastructure equipment, the government of the Russian Federation has been taking measures to find additional funds for the implementation of the national programme. We are making every effort to attain the established goal of the earliest destruction of all chemical weapons.

Guided by the decisions made at the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, we would like to confirm the invitation to the Organisation's Executive Council delegation to visit Russia next spring and one of the Russian chemical weapons destruction facilities.

Today, when the completion of the destruction of the declared chemical weapons in possessor States is within view, progress in this area underscores once again that the basic goal of the Convention, a comprehensive and effective prohibition of chemical weapons and of their use, cannot be reached without meeting the following conditions:

- (a) accession by all states of the world to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC universality);
- (b) adoption by all States Parties of legislative measures providing for the full implementation of their obligations under the Convention, as well as for a consistent and effective application of these measures in practice (national implementation);
- (c) establishment of an effective verification regime for the chemical industry, which would rule out the possibility that chemical weapons might be recreated.

Universality of the Convention and unconditional implementation of its provision on the national level remain the fundamental priorities of the OPCW. We call upon the countries that are outside the international and legal regime of the Chemical Weapons Convention to join the Convention as soon as possible, and on the States Parties to fully implement Convention's provisions concerning the establishment of a national authority and bringing the national legislation in conformity with the requirements of the Convention.

The Convention is an integral mechanism, where the rights and obligations of the States Parties are closely interconnected. Consequently, it is impossible to attain tangible progress in only one sphere, for example, in international cooperation or in providing assistance in the elimination of the chemical weapons threats without ensuring proper national implementation of the Convention. It is only through a consistent and balanced implementation of all the key provisions of the Convention that it is possible to contribute to the attainment of one of its main tasks, which is to promote the use of achievements in the field of chemistry for peaceful purposes and for the benefits of all States Parties.

In April 2013 the Third Review Conference conducted a detailed and impartial analysis of the achievements by the OPCW in the implementation of the goals of the Convention for the near

future and considered ways to adapt the Organisation's activities accordingly. The Russian Federation would like the OPCW, in pursuance of the decisions of the Third Review Conference, to retain its effectiveness and ability to react promptly and appropriately to new challenges and threats, as well as to conduct its activities on a depoliticised basis and adopt decisions on all issues by consensus.

Another significant aspect is the role and place of the OPCW in the international security and disarmament system. It is necessary to preserve the Organisation's identity, its independence and leading role in the area of prohibition of chemical weapons. OPCW effectiveness will only be better if it closely interacts with other disarmament institutions and coordinates efforts with them in such areas as ensuring the WMD non-proliferation regime, counter-terrorism and a quick response to crisis situations.

Following the completion of the destruction of the existing chemical weapons stockpiles, the Convention's verification regime is to remain the fundamental guarantee precluding a recreation of this type of weapons of mass destruction or development of new types of such weapons, and, consequently, to become a key factor for strengthening the Convention. An effective verification regime for the chemical industry is one of the fundamental conditions precluding the re-emergence of chemical weapons. In this context, the OPCW possesses a unique potential, since its mandate to verify chemical industry facilities is of a comprehensive, integral and universal nature.

Today, the OPCW represents one of the most efficiently operating international structures in the field of disarmament. We are interested in seeing the Organisation continue as a depoliticised highly professional platform where the spirit of mutual understanding, objectivity and political tolerance prevail.

While doing our utmost in order to destroy chemical weapons, we should at the same time work actively on the non-proliferation track as well. Prevention of proliferation of WMD and their delivery systems requires concerted efforts of all states. It is necessary to both strengthen the multilateral instruments and non-proliferation mechanisms and ensure that States Parties make appropriate efforts in this area on the national level.

One of the key events of 2013 which is coming to an end is the accession to the Convention of its 189 and 190 States Parties - Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic. We welcome these new Members of the Organisation.

From the very first days of its participation in the Chemical Weapons Convention, Syria has demonstrated unequivocal commitment to the goals and objectives of the Convention and the most responsible fulfilment of its international obligations.

We note that in less than three months Syria was able to achieve truly tangible results in the fulfilment of the decision of the OPCW Executive Council and Resolution 2118 of the United Nations Security Council. Damascus submitted to the OPCW required information on chemical weapons stockpiles, a detailed plan for their destruction and, in accordance with the established deadline - by November 1 - completed the destruction of key industrial equipment for the production of chemical warfare agents, including units for mixing and filling munitions, established its National Authority for the implementation of the provisions of the Convention, provides unimpeded and safe access to its territory of OPCW inspectors and United Nations personnel. The Syrian side despite the most difficult conditions of an armed

conflict and the lack of material, financial and human resources, is scrupulously meeting the target dates for the elimination of certain elements of its chemical weapons programme, established by the decisions of the OPCW.

At the same time, the international community has also been taking important steps to support the plan of chemical demilitarisation of Syria. It formed the OPCW-UN Joint Mission and the United Nations and OPCW trust fund have been set up for the transfer of voluntary financial contributions by donor countries. Particularly important is the fact that the reports of the UN Secretary General and the Director-General of the OPCW Technical Secretariat to the United Nations Security Council noted the continuous and constructive interaction of the Syrian authorities with both organisations in dealing with the destruction of chemical arsenals.

We highly appreciate the efforts in this area being made by the OPCW Technical Secretariat whose staff are impeccably and at a high professional level fulfilling their tasks within the framework of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission lead by Special Coordinator Mrs S. Kaag. The management of the OPCW Technical Secretariat has been able within a short timeframe to consolidate the necessary forces and resources for the successful operation in Syria, to attract and properly distribute assistance from States Parties, mobilise financial support and accumulate additional financial means in the trust funds of the OPCW.

In close cooperation with the Syrian authorities and with active assistance from the entire international community the Organisation is accomplishing the task - unprecedented in world practice - of speedy and as safe as possible elimination of Syrian chemical weapons and their subsequent destruction. On November 15 the OPCW Executive Council adopted important decisions which established highly demanding conditions and timelines for this operation which is warranted by the extraordinary character of the current situation. At the same time responsibility for this unprecedented and unique in terms of scale and complexity operation lies not only with the Syrian government. All conflicting Syrian parties, Syria's neighbours and states which have an influence on the situation in the country, as well as the international community without whose timely and meaningful assistance the process of elimination of Syrian chemical weapons may run into serious difficulties, must bear their part of the responsibility.

The Russian Federation expresses its satisfaction with work done at his post by the Director-General of OPCW Technical Secretariat Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü and supports his reappointment for the second term. We are confident that the vast experience, commitment to the goals and objectives of the Organisation and well deserved authority in international circles will allow ambassador Üzümcü to successfully cope with the new tasks and challenges facing the Organisation in the coming period. We wish him every success in his work.

On October 11 the Norwegian Nobel Peace Committee decided to award the OPCW the Peace Prize for 2013 for its tremendous efforts to eliminate chemical weapons. We welcome this decision and believe that it represents a proper recognition of the achievements of the Organisation as one of the most efficient international structures in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation which successfully accomplishes most difficult technical tasks such as the mission to destroy chemical weapons in Syria.

We are confident that the Organisation and its staff inspired by such a high appreciation of their efforts will continue to do their utmost in order to completely rid the world of chemical weapons and exclude the possibility and risk of their re-emergence and use.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, I wish to assure you that the Russian delegation looks forward to working constructively at the Eighteenth Session of the Conference and is ready to interact in order to strengthen the Convention and the international regime of non-proliferation of chemical weapons in general.

We request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference.

Thank you.

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