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SWITZERLAND

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MARKUS BÖRLIN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SWITZERLAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 23 "ANY OTHER BUSINESS"**

Mr Chairman,

As announced yesterday by my delegation during the debate under agenda item 22 relating to the follow-up to the Third Review Conference, I would like to inform the Assembly about the latest developments regarding the discussion on incapacitating chemical agents, or more precisely on toxic chemicals for law enforcement purposes, which are not riot control agents.

The Third Review Conference did not provide for any formal mandate in this respect, but discussions have clearly shown a real interest in this topic, which represents a major progress. Therefore, this new dynamic cannot be ignored. As we said in our closing remarks at the end of the Third Review Conference, we are determined to continue our efforts, patiently, with a view to ultimately enhance transparency regarding this issue.

In this spirit, we organised yesterday with the support of some delegations a meeting with representatives from all regional groups. The idea was to take stock of the situation since the Third Review Conference. We are of course well aware that the current operation in Syria and all related activities legitimately require the full attention of the States Parties. However, we think it important to initiate discussions on an actualised basis in order to identify the benchmarks for a renewed approach given the fact that consensus is not yet in reach.

Yesterday's useful meeting allowed us to identify some elements, which will require further reflection for the purpose of addressing the complex issue of incapacitating chemical agents in a pragmatic way. We will pursue consultations in the months to come. Of course, in due time, all interested delegations will be welcome to participate in the process.

A first concrete and important step with a view to increase transparency is the inclusion in national statements - be it during the Conference of the States Parties or the Executive Council Sessions, or at any other occasion—of a corresponding policy statement pertaining to incapacitating chemical agents. Switzerland and a growing number of delegations have done so since April. We call upon other States Parties to consider doing so in the future as well.

My delegation looks forward to continuing the debate on this issue.



To conclude, I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this Conference.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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