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**Statement delivered by H.E. Liisa Talonpoika
Permanent Representative of Finland to the OPCW
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I would like to first congratulate you on your election as the Chairperson of the Nineteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. Let me ensure you of Finland's full support in addressing the tasks before us.

Finland fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union. I would however, like to highlight a few topics of particular importance to Finland.

The last couple of years have been exceptional in the OPCW's history and the organization has been in the limelight due to gratifying as well as tragic events. The Nobel Peace Prize in 2013 was indeed a great recognition to the OPCW and its work and it should be seen as a true inspiration for our joint efforts towards a world free of chemical weapons.

To achieve our goal and to raise awareness of the CWC, we need trailblazers and dedicated champions. Finland is honored that the first OPCW-Hague Award was granted to the Finnish Institute for the Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (VERIFIN). This is a valuable recognition on the eminent work that VERIFIN has been done in the field of verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention. VERIFIN and its predecessor, Research Project on the Verification of Chemical Disarmament, date back to 1973. Finland also wishes to warmly congratulate the joint recipient, Dr. Robert Mathews, on the award.

Ms Chairperson,

In April 2013 during the Third Review Conference we were already focused on the future topics of this organization. After the tragic events in Syria, we have rightly concentrated at the core of our mission. Much of our time has been dedicated to dealing with the completion of destruction of the Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles. Undoubtedly, the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons programme has been by far the biggest challenge that the OPCW has ever encountered. Our collective efforts have been substantial. Staying true to the CWC, our work is not finished until the chemical weapons program is completely and irreversibly eliminated.

The use of toxic chemicals constitutes a breach of the CWC. Finland strongly supports the decision of the Director-General that the OPCW Fact Finding Mission continues its investigations in Syria. It is also of utmost importance that prompt destruction of the remaining production facilities is carried out and the discrepancies in the declarations are clarified.

Ms Chairperson,

While we see that the tasks related to Syria's chemical weapons programme are the most important assignment of the organization at the moment, we should not lose sight of other fundamental tasks related to the future of this organization.

We wish to emphasize a few points related to the future of the organization.

The recommendations of the report of the future priorities by the Advisory panel in 2011 and the Third Review Conference should be living documents in guiding the organization in its future work. In this respect, Finland stresses the importance of continuous development of the CWC regime in the way that the organization is able to reflect the changing reality and quickly respond to new threats. These abilities require constant follow-up and alignment of the activities of the organization.

New developments in science and technology should be followed intensively and regularly. For example the convergence in chemistry and biology poses challenges already now and the challenges will most probably increase in the future. While Finland recognizes the vital role of the SAB within the organization and greatly appreciates its work, we think that even more ought to be done. We think that addressing developments in science and technology requires more holistic approach. For instance the information sharing between the Technical Secretariat, National Authorities, industries, academia and non-governmental organizations regarding Science and Technology development could be enhanced. Also the contacts and cooperation with the Biological Weapons Convention should be strengthened considering the underlying trends in science and technology.

According to the definition of the "General Purpose Criterion" ANY toxic chemical or precursor chemical is to be considered a chemical weapon unless intended for purposes not prohibited by the Convention. This means that since the scope of this definition is not limited by the Schedules of Chemicals, it covers all toxic and precursor chemicals, even those that are not discovered yet. Strengthening the status of the "general purpose criterion" and supporting the enhancement of the analysis capabilities of designated laboratories on chemicals that fall under it, would prepare us further to meet the future challenges and developments in Science and Technology.

Finland wishes to stress the role of the designated laboratories especially in investigating for example the alleged use. This turned out to be the case in the United Nations Investigation Mission in Syria. Therefore it is of utmost importance to maintain and support the strong network of designated laboratories i.e. the system of proficiency testing both for environmental and biomedical samples.

We also strongly support the further development and expansion of the OPCW Central Analytical Database, OCAD. The OCAD is by far the widest existing database of chemical warfare agents and vital tool in on-site inspections and also the most reliable database for the off-site analysis. The more comprehensive the OCAD is, the more likely it is that the relevant chemicals to the Convention will be identified. The OCAD is one of the key tools in ensuring the continued effectiveness of the verification regime and its development and expansion with relevant chemicals ought to be of interest to all.

Finland followed with interest the discussion on the so-called Incapacitating Chemical Agents at the Third Review Conference. Discussions would be welcome to identify possible measures that could help in increasing transparency on this topic.

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