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IRELAND

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF IRELAND TO THE
NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Madame Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

I would like to warmly welcome Ambassador Vesela Mrđen Korać, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Croatia to the OPCW, as the Chair of this Conference and to assure you of my delegation's full support throughout your term. I would also like to express my delegation's appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Dr Sa'ad Abdul Majeed Ibrahim Al-Ali for his tireless work over the past year.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union yesterday and would like to add the following remarks in our national capacity.

Last year, my delegation, along with the overwhelming majority of the international community, condemned as utterly reprehensible the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

We welcome the significant progress made by the joint OPCW/UN mission in destroying chemical weapons from Syria since autumn 2013. Ireland welcomes in particular the effective and cooperative work by the international community in the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons stockpile. We were pleased to make a financial contribution to this important work.

We would like to pay tribute to the Mission staff whose professionalism and determination in very challenging circumstances has been exemplary. With 98% of all declared chemical weapons now destroyed, this surely represents an example of what we, the international community, can achieve with political will, cooperation and coordination.

We are encouraged that work will begin shortly on destroying production facilities. My delegation believes that ensuring these facilities are destroyed and that production of such weapons in Syria cannot recommence, is of the utmost importance in particular given the ongoing conflict in the region and the risk that these weapons of mass destruction could fall into the hands of terrorists.

It is with deep concern that we note the most recent reports of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) which found "compelling confirmation" that a toxic chemical was used "systematically and repeatedly"



“as a weapon” in Syria this year; and that “the descriptions, physical properties, behaviour of the gas, and signs and symptoms resulting from exposure, as well as the response of patients to the treatment, leads the FFM to conclude with a high degree of confidence that chlorine, either pure or in mixture, is the toxic chemical in question”.

Ireland fully supports the continuation of the FFM and looks forward to its third report. My delegation also welcomes the appointment of Ambassador José Artur Medeiros as the Director-General’s Special Adviser on Syria. We call on Syria to demonstrate full cooperation with the Chemical Weapons Convention and to address further queries transparently and completely.

It is completely unacceptable that, 100 years after their first use in World War I, our world should once again see the use of chemical weapons. Next year, an event will be held in Ypres, Belgium to commemorate the centenary of the first large scale chemical weapons use in 1915. My delegation sees this commemoration as an opportunity to increase momentum towards a future free of chemical weapons. Ireland welcomes the encouraging steps taken by some States towards ratification of the Convention. We encourage those last remaining States that have not yet done so to accede to the Convention without delay and we urge States Parties to meet their commitments in particular in relation to the destruction of stockpiles.

In closing, Madame Chairperson, I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this Conference and posted on both the OPCW external server and the public website.

I thank you Madame Chairperson.

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