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**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PIERRE-LOUIS LORENZ
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF LUXEMBOURG AT THE
NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Madam Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, allow me to state that Luxembourg fully aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday by H.E. Ambassador Jacek Bylica, Principal Advisor and Special Envoy for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament of the European Union.

One hundred years ago, in one of the World's most atrocious wars, chemical weapons were first used on a massive scale in combat. Even before that, the international community had endeavoured to prohibit the use of chemicals as weapons of war in order to protect human life and prevent indiscriminate use of chemical weapons against civilians.

Since then, the international community has come a long way, as we have witnessed the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which has turned out to become the most successful and effective international disarmament instrument so far, aiming to universally eradicate, within a relatively short period of time, an entire category of declared weapons of mass destruction. It has done so thanks to the establishment of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which has proven its value through its diligent work and implementation of the verification measures foreseen in the Convention. The success of this continuous and efficient work has been crowned by the awarding in 2013 of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Organisation – a success for which I, once more, wish to congratulate you, Director-General Üzümcü, your staff as well as all States Parties, who have contributed towards this remarkable achievement.

However, current affairs quickly face us with the painful reality that our work is far from concluded. The chemical weapons attacks in Ghouta, Syria, on 21 August 2013 have been a stark reminder that chemical weapons remain a threat and that some actors still consider them a legitimate weapon, despite their use being a blatant violation of international law amounting to a crime against humanity as well as a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Luxembourg, as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council during 2013 and 2014, has condemned this attack in the strongest terms and shares the view of those among us who call for those responsible to be held accountable. Luxembourg has actively supported the adoption of United Nations Security



Council resolution 2118 (2013) as well as the elimination and destruction of the entire declared Syrian chemical weapons arsenal through a substantial financial contribution to the destruction effort via the relevant trust funds, as well as an in kind contribution.

Today, one can say that the OPCW-UN Joint Mission has been a huge success removing, under the most dangerous circumstances and within very tight deadlines, an entire chemical weapons stockpile out of Syrian territory and destroying 98% of the declared chemical substances so far. Director-General, allow me to warmly congratulate yourself, your dedicated staff, the Special Coordinator of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission, Sigrid Kaag, her staff, as well as all other actors involved in and contributing to the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons, for mastering what has been so far the fastest and most comprehensive destruction of a State's entire weapons of mass destruction (WMD) stockpile in a very short period of time!

Yet, despite these achievements, the implementation of resolution 2118 has not been completed satisfactorily.

Despite the immense progress in the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons, one very distressing event keeps lurking on our minds: the proven use of chlorine gas against civilians in Syria. From Luxembourg's perspective, the findings of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) set up by the Director-General speak for themselves: its second report clearly confirms that the toxic chemical has been used "systematically and repeatedly" "as a weapon". Witnesses have highlighted the "invariable" presence of helicopters during the attacks, which only the Syrian Government possesses. Clearly, this is a breach of both the Convention and the United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). These atrocious acts cannot go unpunished.

Regarding the destruction of the 12 remaining chemical weapon production facilities, as well as the infrastructure associated with its production and the declared munitions developed for its delivery, Luxembourg reiterates its call on the Syrian Arab Republic to take the necessary measures to ensure that its chemical weapons programme is completely and irreversibly eliminated. In the same vein, the Syrian Arab Republic must provide sufficient and adequate evidence in order to clarify all discrepancies in the Syrian initial declarations.

Luxembourg believes that the Syrian Arab Republic, as a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, is fully responsible for meeting the costs arising in connection with the elimination of its chemical weapons programme and the verification thereof. Syria must meet its obligations under the Convention. In this respect, Luxembourg supports the EU's decision of February 2014 to encourage the use of frozen Syrian funds in order to pay for the destruction effort and related verification activities.

Luxembourg remains convinced that the Chemical Weapons Convention can only reach its full effect if it becomes fully universal and therefore Luxembourg calls upon the few remaining States to make every effort to sign and ratify this significant Convention in the field of disarmament, which has proven to be a most successful instrument of international law.

While we congratulate those States that have successfully completed the destruction of their declared chemical weapons stockpiles, Luxembourg remains concerned of the slow progress

of some possessor States in their respective destruction processes. We call upon them to double their efforts and respect the set final extended deadlines.

Regarding the Convention's implementation, allow me to highlight that Luxembourg is currently in the process of a comprehensive review of its entire export control system, including a review of its national legislation.

Of course, this also impacts our implementation of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Presently some provisions of the Convention might not be sufficiently implemented by Luxembourg. In the context of our export control system's review, we are confident to solve these outstanding issues in finalising our legislative procedures in due course.

In conclusion, allow me to stress that Luxembourg is looking forward to working with all delegations in a constructive and open manner at this Conference and that we trust that it will be a success.

I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session of the Council and be published on the OPCW website and extranet.

Thank you Madam Chairperson.

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