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ITALY

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF FIFTY-SIX STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION DELIVERED BY H.E. MR FRANCESCO AZZARELLO PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ITALY TO THE OPCW AT THE NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES

The Republic of Albania, the Principality of Andorra, Australia, Austria, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Bulgaria, Canada, the Republic of Costa Rica, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of France, the Republic of Finland, the Federal Republic of Germany, Georgia, the Hellenic Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Iceland, Ireland, the Italian Republic, Japan, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Republic of Korea, the State of Kuwait, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Malta, the Republic of Moldova, the Principality of Monaco, Montenegro, the Kingdom of Morocco, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Kingdom of Norway, the Republic of Poland, the Portuguese Republic, the State of Qatar, Romania, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Slovak Republic, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Slovenia, the Kingdom of Spain, the Kingdom of Sweden, the Swiss Confederation, the Republic of Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America.

The States Parties subscribing to this statement note that over the past twelve months several positive developments have taken place in the extraordinary effort to eliminate the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons programme, including the removal of the declared chemical weapons stockpile from the Syrian Arab Republic, the complete destruction of Category 1 chemical weapons and the near completion of the destruction of Category 2 chemical weapons. These developments constitute significant steps towards the complete dismantling of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. All this has been achieved safely and without harming the environment and represents a considerable success for the international community and a remarkable example of international cooperation.

The States Parties subscribing to this statement wish to express their deepest appreciation to the State Parties that have contributed either financially or in-kind to the successful outcome of this operation. The Director-General and the Technical Secretariat, the Special Coordinator and the OPCW-UN Joint Mission staff deserve special thanks for their dedication and commitment.

The States Parties subscribing to this statement are deeply concerned, however, that the Fact-Finding Mission, set up by the OPCW Director-General to establish the facts around



allegations that chlorine has been used as a chemical weapon, has confirmed the use of such a chemical in its second report (S/1212/2014, dated 10 September 2014 and Corr.1, dated 29 September 2014). We note with deep concern that the Fact-Finding Mission reported that its information constitutes “compelling confirmation that a toxic chemical was used as a weapon, systematically and repeatedly,” in three villages in the northern part of the Syrian Arab Republic, and concluded, with a high degree of confidence, that this was chlorine. We share the view that the information presented by the Fact-Finding Mission is substantial. This includes the fact that witnesses invariably connected the attacks to the use of helicopters. Only the Syrian military possesses the capability to use helicopters in such attacks.

The Fact-Finding Mission also reports that new allegations are continuing to be made, some as recently as August 2014, which bear strong resemblance to those that the Fact-Finding Mission confirmed as having been chlorine attacks. Therefore, the States Parties subscribing to this statement fully support the intention of the Director-General to have the Fact-Finding Mission continue its work and remain determined to sanction those responsible for these horrific acts.

The use of chlorine or any other toxic chemical as a weapon is a clear breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention and of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). The States Parties subscribing to this statement firmly believe that all perpetrators of atrocious abuses and war crimes in the Syrian Arab Republic, including the use of chemical weapons, must be held accountable. We call upon the Executive Council of the OPCW to consider necessary consequences under the provisions of the Convention.

The States Parties subscribing to this statement call upon the Syrian Arab Republic to provide full cooperation to the OPCW for the prompt destruction of the remaining chemical weapons production facilities and to the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team for the verification of the Syrian Arab Republic's initial and subsequent declarations and clarification of the gaps and discrepancies discovered therein. To ensure confidence, the Syrian Arab Republic must provide the international community with credible evidence to support its assurances that it has fully abandoned its chemical weapons programme. This cannot be achieved while use of chemical weapons continues and new allegations of use of chemical weapons continue to be made. Complete and accurate declarations must be provided, and destruction operations must be completed promptly and in full in order to deter and prevent further use of chemical weapons against the Syrian people.

The States Parties subscribing to this statement call upon the Syrian Arab Republic to respect fully its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, the OPCW Executive Council decision of 27 September 2013 and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

We welcome other delegations wishing to subscribe to this statement to do so.

I ask that this statement be made an official document of this session of the Conference and posted to both the OPCW external server and the public website.