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POLAND

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DR JAN BORKOWSKI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF POLAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

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

At the outset, let me express the appreciation of Poland for the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Vesela Mrđen Korać of Croatia, for her dedication and effective manner in which she presided over the Conference during the last year. At the same time I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Eduardo Ibarrola-Nicolín of Mexico, on the appointment as the new Chairperson of the Conference. I wish to assure you of the Polish delegation's support and cooperation in the fulfillment of your important mandate.

Poland aligns itself with statement of the European Union.

I wish to thank the Director-General for his opening statement in which he highlighted milestones of implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention over past 12 months. Unfortunately, during that period the Executive Council and the Technical Secretariat were primarily preoccupied by numerous reports regarding prohibited use of toxic chemicals as chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. Poland joins all States Parties in condemning horrific attacks that were investigated by the Fact-Finding Mission. In this context we welcome the latest decision of the Executive Council of the OPCW (EC-M-50/DEC.1, dated 23 November 2015). As we made clear on previous occasions continued use of chemical weapons strikes at the very foundations on which the Chemical Weapons Convention has been built. Against this background Poland expects that the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) established by unanimously adopted United Nations Security Council resolution 2235 (2015) will identify perpetrators of chemical attack in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Past months were also marked by tremendous efforts of the Technical Secretariat to destroy Syrian chemical weapons and production facilities. Poland expresses its appreciation for the progress achieved in that regard. Unfortunately, some open issues remain. Among them the question of completeness of Syrian chemical weapons declarations. We encourage the Syrian Arab Republic to continue to cooperate with the Technical Secretariat to fully clarify all gaps and inconsistencies identified by the Declaration Assessment Team. This is an important measure which should build confidence that Syrian chemical weapons programme has been



fully and irreversibly dismantled. It goes without saying that the Chemical Weapons Convention's verification regime is primarily based on mutual confidence.

As in previous years Poland introduced in the United Nations General Assembly First Committee the draft resolution on the Chemical Weapons Convention implementation. Poland, as a sole sponsor of this resolution, tried to reflect as accurately as possible the current state of implementation of the Convention without going beyond language agreed at the OPCW. We presented progress made by the OPCW and the Technical Secretariat on the implementation of the Convention's provisions and ensuring the universality of the Convention. We also reflected the ongoing activities of the international community on cases of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

We have to admit that on this last issue we did not achieve a consensus. However, the overwhelming majority of the delegations requested, following the decisions of the OPCW policy-making organs, that the draft resolution provided an unequivocal support for all the efforts to investigate and clarify any cases of use of chemical weapons under any circumstances. This request was included in the draft resolution.

Poland stresses that the main objective for the resolution will always remain unchanged. The unanimous support for the full and universal implementation of the Convention and appreciation for the excellent work done by the OPCW is fundamental. We hope that the United Nations community will be able to return to adoption of this resolution by consensus.

Achieving full universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention is essential to the realisation of its objectives. In this context Poland welcomes two new states that have recently joined the Convention, namely Angola and Myanmar bringing the total number of States Parties to 192. At the same time we commend the Technical Secretariat for all the efforts put in promoting full universality of the chemical weapons prohibition.

Last year we saw a growing number of chemical security and safety threats, including the use of toxic chemicals as weapons and means of terror by non-State actors and increasing number of accidents with toxic chemicals. These reports add a sense of urgency to the transformation of the OPCW into an agency capable of decreasing chemical threat. Poland welcomes discussion on the future of the OPCW initiated by the Director-General. We hope that all States Parties to the Convention will take an active part in it. Poland believes that Articles X on assistance and protection and XI on international cooperation of the Convention should be core drivers for the OPCW transformation in the coming years. These efforts should be supplemented by enhancement of the OPCW verification mechanism to ensure non re-emergence of chemical weapons.

This year we have commemorated the centenary of the first large scale use of chemical weapons. In this context I would like to thank the Director-General for organising the exhibition devoted to this sad anniversary at the premises of the OPCW. As part of education and outreach efforts Poland together with other interested countries that participated in this exhibition will display its exhibits in conjunction with the Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention that will take place in Geneva between 14 and 18 December.

I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Twentieth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.