



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden

Statement by Sweden Twenty-First Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention

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Permanent Representative of Sweden to the OPCW

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Chairperson,

Let me first of all welcome you to the chair of this 21st Conference of the States Parties, and thank the Director-General for his comprehensive opening statement. Sweden is aligned with the statement of the European Union. I will limit myself to the following additional points in my national capacity.

The past year has been a challenging one for the Chemical Weapons Convention and its implementing agency. The most disconcerting development has been the unequivocal determination of the Joint Investigative Mechanisms that chemical weapons attacks confirmed by the OPCW had been perpetrated by the Syrian Armed Forces and the Daesh terrorist group. Following the June report of the JIM, Foreign Minister Margot Wallström remarked in a statement, and I quote:

"It is now up to the international community to take action, and to make sure that those responsible are brought to justice. The use of chemical weapons is unacceptable and must not be perpetrated with impunity."

End quote.

Sweden welcomes the decision taken at the last session of the Executive Council with regard to the JIM's reports, though we would have preferred to include provisions for declarations by the Syrian Arab Republic of its holdings of toxic chemicals in accordance with the Convention. Sweden also welcomes the unanimous decision of the UN Security Council to extend the mandate of the JIM, so that it may continue its important work of identifying the perpetrators behind chemical weapons attacks.

During the past year, Swedish authorities have provided forensic analyses at the request of the Joint Investigative Mechanism, and the Swedish Defence Research Agency has continued to provide off-site analytical services to the OPCW. Sweden has contributed 2 million Swedish Kronor to the UN Trust Fund for the

Joint Investigative Mechanism and a further 1 million to the OPCW Trust Fund for Syria Missions. We are currently considering a contribution to the UNODA for an exercise to draw lessons from the work of the Joint Investigative Mechanism. We once again commend the men and women of OPCW and JIM working on the Syria file, oftentimes in difficult and dangerous conditions.

Sweden calls on the Syrian Arab Republic to heed the Director-General's call for full disclosure with the OPCW Declarations Assessment Team, and to cooperate fully with the Fact-Finding Missions and the JIM. Sweden will continue to follow closely the Syrian chemical weapons question in the coming years, both as member of the OPCW Executive Council and as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council 2017-2018.

Chairperson,

Chemical weapons disarmament continues to be a particular priority to my government. We welcome the successful international mission to ship out the remaining chemical weapons from Libya for destruction, in response to a request by the Libyan Government of National Accord and following the endorsement of UN Security Council Resolution 2298.

Nevertheless, more than six thousand metric tonnes of declared chemical weapons still remain to be destroyed before this fundamental treaty obligation is fully implemented. Sweden therefore once again calls on the Russian Federation and the United States to expedite destruction in accordance with the Convention and decisions of the Conference of the States Parties.

Chairperson,

The existence of terrorists with access to chemical weapons is a highly worrying development. Sweden considers it important that we as States Parties express ourselves clearly on the role of the Chemical Weapons Convention in relation non-state Actors, and is therefore co-sponsor of the draft Executive Council decision on that topic. We hope it will be adopted at our March session. Sweden welcomes the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, under the leadership of Ambassador Aido of Ghana, and the sub-working group on non-state actors under Ambassador Infante of Chile, as well as the initiative of the Technical Secretariat with regard to Rapid Reaction Teams.

Chairperson,

In the past year, the Swedish Defence Research Agency organized a second Analytical Skills Development course under Article XI of the Convention. Another significant effort was the identification of chlorine exposure markers, and Sweden is continuing efforts to develop verification tools for agent exposure.

Sweden looks forward to the adoption of the Budget for 2017 at this session of the CSP. We reiterate our call on all States Parties with arrears to address this situation expeditiously and on all States Parties to pay their assessed contribution in full and on time.

In the coming year, Sweden would like to see a strengthening of the decision on re-hiring of experienced inspectors, and a designation scheme that ensures that laboratories participating in multiple networks do not incur unreasonable costs. In this regard, we welcome the initiation of a confidence-building exercise on toxin analysis, a capacity that a Swedish expert helped develop at the OPCW laboratory during this summer. Sweden is looking forward to participating in the important work ahead, including the appointment of the next Director-General, and the preparations for the Fourth Review Conference.

Last but not least, we look forward to partaking in the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The achievements of the OPCW for international peace and security are well known and were deservedly recognized through the awarding of the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize. It is Sweden's conviction that the OPCW is well equipped to deal also with the current serious challenges to the Convention, in particular the continuous allegations of use of chemical weapons in Iraq and Syria, and the confirmed non-compliance of one of its States Parties.

With those words, I wish us every success in the week ahead.

Thank you Chairperson