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**RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AT THE  
TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES  
(ON THE DEVELOPMENT BY A GROUP OF COUNTRIES OF A STATEMENT ON  
THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC)**

Mr Chairperson,

We would like to voice our opinion on the statement on Syria, which the States Parties to the Convention have been asked to consider signing.

The contents of this statement practically repeat the decision of the OPCW Executive Council that was taken on 11 November this year following a vote, and which we believe is deeply flawed and confrontational. The decision was taken in a voting procedure that ensured a majority by only one vote for its adoption. If someone believes that to be their victory, then it is a hollow one. As a result we have, for the first time in many years, a schism within the Organisation. We ended up with a document, the provisions of which among other things make it impossible to carry out inspections in practice; in the situation that has developed, it will be extremely difficult to move forward with any and all future OPCW work on the Syrian chemical dossier.

Now, via the adoption during the Conference of a declaration that is similar in tone, we are essentially being asked to deepen that schism and draw dividing lines between those who support it and those who do not. This strikes an even greater blow to the authority and integrity of the Organisation, which has been to date recognised as possibly the most successful international mechanism in disarmament, having become laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize.

There is no need to reiterate the position of the Russian Federation on the results of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism: we have stated our position in detail on a variety of international platforms, and it is well known to the members of this Organisation. We firmly believe that weak and unconvincing evidence should not be the basis for any far-reaching conclusions concerning the responsibility of Syria's government agencies for crimes involving chemical weapons.

One begins to get the impression that certain others are unable to learn from history. We clearly remember how, in the recent past, the representatives of some countries dangled a test tube in front of the United Nations Security Council, confirming that this convincing and irrefutable evidence of the presence of weapons of mass destruction in one country in particular. The consequences are known to all: an intervention, bloodshed, and chaos in that



country. Time passed, and it became clear that all of the allegations were unfounded. Now, we have the conclusions of the third and fourth reports by the Joint Investigative Mechanism being waved at us, as if these constitute absolute and irrefutable evidence of the use of weapons of mass destruction by Syrian State-led troops. Any doubts on this point are flatly rejected. But what if these doubts turn out to be the truth in the end, and those who had them turn out to be right?

We call on the States Parties of the Conference to carefully consider this matter and think about what they are being asked to associate themselves with today, what they are being persuaded to sign up for. The truth is a stubborn thing, and it tends to come to light sooner or later. And then everything will fall into place.

We are against any dividing lines within the Organisation. We are confident that we need to focus on what truly unites us and make our efforts in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation stronger and more effective.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

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