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SINGAPORE

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JAYA RATNAM
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SINGAPORE TO THE OPCW AT THE
TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,

I am honoured to address the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties . Allow me to congratulate you, Mr Chairperson, on your appointment as the Chairperson of the Twenty-First Conference of the States Parties. I am confident that the Conference will be a success, and you have our full support.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Eduardo Ibarrola-Nicolín, for his outstanding chairmanship of the Twentieth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. Our deepest gratitude also goes, to the Director-General for his stewardship of OPCW, and all his staff for their dedicated work.

Singapore notes the complete destruction of all chemical weapons declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. We appreciate the joint effort of the OPCW and the United Nations in overseeing the destruction of the stockpiles. While this closes an important chapter in the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons programme, we note with concern the recent report of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) on the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

The JIM demonstrates the resolve of the international community and sends a clear message that the use of chemical weapons will not be tolerated under any circumstances. The use of chemical weapons is a serious violation of international law, and has deplorable humanitarian consequences. Individuals, entities, groups or governments responsible for any use of chemical weapons must be held accountable. In this regard, Singapore fully supports the efforts by the OPCW in clarifying Syria's declaration and addressing the ongoing use of toxic chemicals as weapons in Syria.

We also express our appreciation for the international community's support for Libya's request for assistance to fulfil its obligation to destroy the remaining elements of its former chemical weapons programme. The removal of the remaining Category 2 precursors ensures that they cannot fall into the hands of non-State actors. We commend the OPCW for coordinating this complex operation.



Next year, we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the founding of the OPCW. The OPCW remains the world's most effective disarmament agency, with 192 Member States, representing 98% of the global population. We have also witnessed the elimination of over 93% of the world's declared chemical weapons.

As we transit to the post-destruction phase of the Convention, there is an urgent need to identify and keep up with emerging technologies, especially to ensure that they will not be exploited. At the same time, we must also harness technology to respond to new threats in a rapidly changing environment. Singapore is firmly committed to supporting the work of the OPCW in this regard, through the provision of technical assistance, as well as providing analysis for off-site samples.

Singapore is constantly reviewing our policies to strengthen the current control measures in the chemical industry. Implementing storage control on facilities handling scheduled chemicals is one of the measures we have undertaken to enhance supply chain security. Singapore will continue to explore initiatives to ensure the safety and security of the industry.

An effective industry verification regime is a confidence-building measure to ensure that Member States meet the requirements of the Convention. It is a deterrent against any intention to contravene the provisions of the Convention. Our National Authority conducts regular facility audits and outreach sessions to ensure that the industry understands and fulfils the obligations of the Convention.

Singapore remains committed to our contributions to the assistance and protection programmes under Article X of the Convention. We provide technical assistance through volunteering our verification and analytical facilities, and by hosting training courses such as the "Emergency Response to Chemical Incident" course conducted by the Singapore Civil Defence Force. We will continue to contribute to the Convention's important work and look forward to hosting the next run in 2017.

In conclusion Mr Chairperson,

We have made tremendous progress under the Convention since its inception, and have come ever closer to the complete elimination of chemical weapons. However, our work is clearly not yet complete. We must continue to adapt to a rapidly changing environment to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons. Singapore fully supports the efforts of the OPCW, and remains committed to ensuring the complete and universal implementation of the Convention.

Singapore is confident that with the continued support of all Member States, and the tireless efforts of the OPCW, we will be able to achieve our collective goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

Mr Chairperson, in closing, I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Conference. Thank you very much.