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ROMANIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR BRANDUSA PREDESCU
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ROMANIA TO THE OPCW AT THE
TWENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

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

Let me start by expressing the appreciation of Romania for the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Christoph Israng of Germany, for his able stewardship at the forefront of the Conference during the last year. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki of Morocco, on the election as the new Chairperson of the Conference. On behalf of Romania, I wish to assure you of the entire support in fulfilling your mandate.

Romania fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. At the same time, I would like to briefly address the Conference in my national capacity.

First of all, let me thank the Director-General for his wise leadership in the activity of the Organisation throughout this year. At the current session of the Conference, Romania would like to pay special tribute to H.E. Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for his essential contribution during his two mandates as Director-General at the helm of the OPCW. Thanks to his balanced approach and hard work, H.E. Ambassador Üzümcü has greatly contributed to the numerous key achievements of the OPCW since December 2009 to date.

I would also like to sincerely congratulate H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias for the large support received during the process of appointment of the future Director-General. Furthermore, Romania highly appreciates the valuable candidates put forward by several other countries for this important position and their commendable effort to facilitate consensus. I wish to express Romania's confidence that H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias' solid professional background from July 2018 will add further substantial value to the dedicated work of the OPCW.

2017 has been yet another challenging year for the Chemical Weapons Convention. Twenty years since the entry into force of the Convention we have been once again witnessing troubling confirmations of use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic and by ISIL. Romania stands firm in condemning, in the strongest possible terms, the use of chemical weapons by anyone, be it State or non-State actors, anywhere and under any circumstances and expresses its conviction that perpetrators must be held accountable. The norm established by the Convention is non-negotiable.



Romania expresses its deep concern on the failure to reach agreement on the renewal of the mandate of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to further investigate the incidents related to the use of chemical weapons. We therefore call for swift action to be taken with a view to allowing the JIM to continue its essential work. Furthermore, Romania reiterates its strong support for the ongoing work of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM). We have full confidence in its work and highly value the unparalleled expertise of the FFM.

With respect to upholding the norms and principles enshrined in the Convention, this delegation expresses its concern with regard to the still existing gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies in the declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic. We call on the Syrian Arab Republic to fully cooperate with the Technical Secretariat and clarify the outstanding issues regarding its declaration.

On another note, we welcome the announcement that the Russian Federation has completed the destruction of its remaining declared chemical weapons stockpiles in Kizner as a major step towards delivering a world free from chemical weapons. Romania also praises the Secretariat's experts for their dedicated work and the States Parties that supported the Russian Federation's chemical demilitarisation programme.

My delegation is pleased to acknowledge the work undertaken by the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW, the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and of the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors and their valuable contribution to the work of the Organisation in dealing with complex current and future challenges. We shall stay engaged in these activities at the OPCW with a view to preparing the ground for a thorough and successful Forth Review Conference in 2018.

Romania firmly believes in the power of effective multilateralism and international cooperation. We therefore welcome the signing, in September this year, of the Agreement between Romania and the OPCW on the privileges and immunities of the OPCW, which will offer a valuable and very practical leverage to implement bilateral projects. A clear example is the fact that Romania and the Technical Secretariat are already preparing an important Rapid Response and Assistance Mission (RRAM) exercise to be held in Romania, which aims at ensuring readiness of OPCW and national experts in contingency situations.

I will not end Romania's statement before briefly mentioning that on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention and of the founding of the OPCW, Romania organized an *alumni event* in Bucharest. Under the same umbrella of the twentieth anniversary, a special envelope has been produced by Romfilatelia with a view to further raising awareness in Romania, as a State Party to the Convention, about the work of the OPCW. The anniversary has also been an excellent opportunity to highlight Romania's active and responsible conduct as a member of the Organisation and as a strong supporter of the principles and goals of the Convention.

Mr Chairperson, I would like to request that this statement be issued as an official document of the Twenty-Second Session of the Conference of the States Parties and posted on the OPCW external server and public website. Thank you.