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**TURKEY**

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REPUBLIC OF TURKEY TO THE OPCW AT THE  
TWENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,  
Mr Director-General,  
Distinguished representatives,

It is a great privilege to address the Conference of the States Parties of the OPCW at this annual event.

Allow me to congratulate you Mr Chairperson, Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki of Morocco, on your election to the Chair of this Conference.

I have no doubt that under your able leadership and Director-General's excellent guidance, this Conference will produce fruitful results in line with our common aim of reaching a world free of chemical weapons.

I would also like to commend the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Christoph Israng of Germany, for his contributions to the success of the Twenty-First Conference of the States Parties held last year, as well as to the work of the OPCW since the previous Conference.

I wish to send our appreciation to the Chairperson of the Executive Council, Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal of Bangladesh, and the members of the Bureau for their successful administration of the work of the Council during a period, which the Organisation has faced many challenges.

Since the adoption of the Executive Council decision on the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons in the second half of 2013 many unprecedented developments have taken place.

One important undertaking was the process for the removal of declared chemical weapons outside Syria. This was a daunting task and a great responsibility for the OPCW-United Nations Joint Mission. The Director-General of the OPCW and his dedicated team deserve great appreciation for their efforts in achieving significant success with the elimination of the all declared chemical weapons.

However, as was announced by the Technical Secretariat, the outstanding inaccuracies, gaps, discrepancies and inconsistencies of the Syrian regime's declaration continue to exist.



Regrettably, despite a great number of consecutive visits of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) to Syria throughout the last 4 years and despite the engagement of the Director-General with the regime officials, these gaps, have not diminished. As depicted by the relevant Council decisions, outstanding issues still need to be solved.

Discrepancies regarding the chemical weapons declaration of the Syrian regime underline the risk and possibility of non-State actors operating in the area taking possession of toxic chemicals and chemical weapons.

In this respect, I would like to emphasise that this disturbing possibility is not only related to terrorist entities such as Daesh and Al-Nusra Front, but also pertains to other terrorist entities such as PKK and its Syrian affiliate PYD/YPG which continue to operate in Syria and go on with their own crimes against humanity.

Uncertainties as to the precise quantity of chemical weapons that were destroyed or used prior to the regime's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention are also worrisome.

As we all know, using chemical weapons does not only breach the Chemical Weapons Convention and the United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), but also constitutes a war crime and a crime against humanity.

The recent seventh report of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), once again attributed the responsibility of using chemical weapons against its own people to a State Party

In this respect, I would like to underline Turkey's position. Turkey strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons, as well as toxic chemicals as a weapon, by anyone, be it a State Party or a non-State actor.

Turkey expects the international community to act in a concerted manner to put a stop to the cruelty through the use of chemical weapons. This was consistently underlined on many occasions.

The international community needs to be decisive. Lack of firm action against the background of all the official reports and incidents unfortunately harms the credibility of the international community and our organisations.

As a State Party, meticulously fulfilling its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, Turkey firmly supports and facilitates the activities of both the DAT and FFM. Turkey believes that both the FFM and JIM's efforts are being conducted in an impartial, unbiased and a professional manner.

In this regard, Turkey firmly supports the continuation of the work of the OPCW's Fact-Finding Mission and the extension of the mandate of the JIM to put the violations on record and bring them to the attention of the international community.

We need to draw significant lessons from past grievances to prevent their recurrence in the future.

With this understanding, Turkey continues to attribute utmost significance to the universalisation of the Convention.

On this occasion, we once again call upon those States who are not yet party to the Chemical Weapons Convention to do so without further delay. We believe joining of those remaining countries to the Chemical Weapons Convention regime would bolster the efforts in other disarmament fields, in particular the nuclear disarmament initiatives.

On another note, I wish to congratulate “The African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism” based in Algeria and the “The International Master Courses in Protection against CBRNe Events” of the Rome Tor Vergata University.

This award provides an important incentive for furthering the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Two decades have elapsed since the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Turkey sincerely and substantially contributed to the realisation of the aims and successes of the Convention since its signing in 1997. We will continue to do so.

Before I conclude, I would like to request that this statement be treated as an official document of this session of the Conference of the States Parties and be posted on the external server and the website.

Thank you.

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