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**Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons**  
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Mr. Chairman, Director-General, Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Chemical Weapons Convention, now in its 22<sup>nd</sup> year of global implementation, has an extraordinary history of success – over 69,000 metric tons of deadly chemical agents now safely destroyed, representing over 96% of declared stockpiles; 193 States Parties today, the largest multilateral arms control organization, with only four remaining countries outside this abolition regime; over 6,800 inspections at military and industrial sites in 87 countries since 1997; and, perhaps most important, broad recognition of the CWC as a model for global abolition of whole classes of weapon systems.

Mr. Chairman,

The CWC has also faced many important challenges over its history – recognizing that all declared possessor countries would not be able to meet the treaty-designated stockpile destruction deadlines; experiencing technical difficulties with destruction technologies, some causing deadline violations; acknowledging that certain possessor countries would not be able to afford the expense of safe destruction efforts; encouraging all States Parties to improve annual declarations, national implementation, and international trade data; experiencing shortfalls in annual assessment payments and managing resultant cash-flow difficulties; and raising public awareness and involvement of civil society, including non-governmental experts, in support of this historic abolition regime.

But we all face today the most important challenges to the CWC's existence – the blatant, illegal, and inhumane use of chemical agents in warfare in Syria and Iraq since 2012, and as an assassination tool in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Salisbury, United Kingdom, over the past sixteen months. The primary goals of the CWC are to safely eliminate all chemical weapons and agents in the world, and to build and sustain a world free of these deadly and banned chemical weapons. These most recent challenges must be fully addressed in order for the CWC, the OPCW, and States Parties to meet these historic goals.

Mr. Chairman,

We now know from the reports of the Fact-Finding Mission and the Joint Investigative Mechanism that one State Party has used chemical agents – sarin nerve agent and chlorine, a dual-use chemical – at least four times in Syria. We also know that the Islamic State, a non-state actor, has used mustard agent at least twice in Syria and Iraq. We also suspect that an advanced military nerve agent has been used three months ago to attempt to assassinate a former intelligence agent in the UK, and that VX nerve agent was used sixteen months ago to assassinate a North Korean citizen in the Kuala Lumpur airport in Malaysia. Unfortunately, the extension of the JIM's mandate has been vetoed in late 2017 in the United Nations Security Council, thereby stopping any effort to continue investigating who actually perpetrated these criminal and murderous acts.

Mr. Chairman,

If the post-World War II United Nations mechanism, providing five States Parties with veto power in the Security Council, precludes any investigation of attribution in the use of chemical agents as weapons today, it is incumbent upon the CWC States Parties to take action. While we all know that this may lead to proof beyond a reasonable doubt of certain States Parties' serious violations of the CWC, beyond those violations already documented, this is absolutely necessary to uphold the global norm against use of these weapons of mass destruction. There must be no impunity allowed in these and any future such cases, otherwise continued use of banned chemical agents will very likely appear in the near future.

How would we explain to our constituencies our refusal to further investigate, through the excellent and independent Fact-Finding Missions, through the Declaration Assessment Team, and through a JIM-type mechanism, if, when, where, how, and by whom chemical agents were used as weapons? None of us wants to be in this position. No amount of confusing, disassembling, and distracting explanations by certain individuals, groups, and/or countries must be allowed to block our continued thorough investigation of these alleged incidents, now or in the future. Only with independent and convincing evidence and investigation into accountability will we be able to say to future generations that we not only fully implemented the Chemical Weapons Convention, but that we also fully defended it from all assaults and attacks.

As a final note, let me congratulate all of the OPCW Technical Secretariat staff; all of the FFM, DAT, and JIM inspectors; all delegation members and foreign ministries; and all members of our CWC Coalition who have fully supported the CWC and OPCW in order to build a more secure and sustainable world. As this may also be the last major CWC conference for our distinguished Director-General Ahmet Uzumcu, let me wish him a smooth transition and many more successful years beyond the OPCW.

Thank you for your kind attention, and I wish for this statement to be made part of the final CSP Special Session record and posted on the public website.