



Embassy of Finland  
The Hague

## **Statement by Finland**

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**Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties**

**The Hague, 27 June 2018**

Mr Chairperson, Mr Director-General, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finland fully supports the statement made earlier by the European Union. In addition, allow me to highlight a few issues from a national perspective.

Mr Chairperson,

Our meeting today could not be more timely or more important. Just two weeks ago, we received the latest confirmation by the OPCW Fact Finding Mission of chemical weapons use in Syria. With the confirmed incidents in Syria and Iraq, Malaysia and the United Kingdom, we are witnessing developments today that would have seemed unimaginable until just a few years ago.

With the recurrent, and constantly increasing, use of chemical weapons, it is no longer an exaggeration to say that the Chemical Weapons Convention itself is facing an acute crisis – one that we as States Parties have the responsibility to respond to.

For us, the tasks of this meeting are clear: To send a strong political signal of the global commitment to uphold the ban on the use of chemical weapons, and to decide on concrete measures that will assist in achieving that in practice.

In the current situation, it is extremely important that we all as States Parties come together to express our commitment to the Convention, its aims, object and purpose: to end the use of chemical weapons, for all time.

This meeting, with its very broad participation is in itself already a strong manifestation of our joint political will. Now we need to see that this will is borne out in practice. Impunity for the heinous acts we have witnessed over the last months and years cannot be allowed to continue.

For that to happen, words alone are not enough. We need concrete actions.

For upholding the norm against the use of chemical weapons, accountability is absolutely vital. And for accountability to take place, attribution is needed.

That is why we fully support the draft decision proposed by the United Kingdom, as contained in document C-SS-4/DEC/CRP.1/Rev.1, tasking the Secretariat with the identification of the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons – a task mandated by the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Given the current impasse at the UN Security Council, it is only natural that we turn to the OPCW for a solution. As we have heard from the Director-General, the Organisation has the technical expertise and operational experience to carry out investigations also for attribution purposes – given the necessary cooperation from States Parties, and the resources needed for the task. And as we have seen, over the years and also very recently, the Technical Secretariat can and does deliver even on very complex and demanding mandates. We have no doubt that this will be the case also in implementing this decision.

Mr Chairperson,

Finland fully supports the important work of the OPCW Technical Secretariat. We have full confidence in the expertise, professionalism and impartiality of the OPCW staff.

We would also like to commend Director-General Ahmet Üzümcü for his outstanding contribution to the Organisation at a time of critical importance not only for the Chemical Weapons Convention, but the rules-based international system as a whole. Your commitment and personal engagement, Excellency, have been truly remarkable.

We are confident that Ambassador Fernando Arias, in assuming the position of Director-General next month, will follow this excellent example. We wish him the best of success in this important office.

Mr Chairperson, dear colleagues,

The challenges we face are indeed great, but by working together, we will be able to overcome them. Finland, for one, is ready to work with all delegations towards that end.