



OPCW

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IRELAND

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MARY WHELAN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRELAND TO THE OPCW
ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE THIRD REVIEW CONFERENCE**

Mr Chairman,

Let me first of all thank you for your stewardship of this meeting. Let me express a particular thanks to the Ambassador of Iraq, His Excellency Sa'ad Abdul Majeed Ibrahim Al-Ali. It is thanks to his perseverance, tolerance and courtesy that we have arrived at a consensus outcome document.

This has indeed been a long journey which began two years ago with the publication of the Advisory Panel report on the future priorities of the OPCW that helped to define the issues which needed to be addressed by the Third Review Conference. That report challenged us to change by design and not by default; I believe that we have risen to that challenge.

The Open-Ended Working Group prepared the work of this conference in an exemplary manner through an outstanding chair, Her Excellency Nassima Baghli of Algeria. Her work has also borne fruit this evening.

While the European Union is happy with the overall focus and content of the outcome document as relating to the work of the Organisation and regards it as a good outcome, its value will ultimately be judged by whether in five years' time, we have made progress on the important issues which it addresses.

The European Union does have regrets and serious concerns about what is not in the report. We are particularly concerned that we were not able to go further in the reference in the agreed text to Syria. We feel that this part of the report does not adequately capture the depth of concerns expressed by many delegations of all groups and regions in the plenary debate, nor does it adequately reflect the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his address to the Third Review Conference. The European Union remains gravely concerned about the possible use of chemical weapons in Syria. We recall that the Syrian authorities bear a particular responsibility to ensure that their chemical weapons are stored securely pending independently verified destruction and are not permitted to fall into the hands of any other State or non-State actor.

Before concluding, I wish to thank some of the unsung heroes of this Conference. Some of them are on the podium, the Director-General and his staff, some of whom may not be here



but worked tirelessly last night putting the various textual proposals on the screen for us. In particular, it would be remiss of me not to thank Ambassador Santiago Oñate, who was an invaluable resource for all of us and a source of great wisdom throughout this process.

I would ask that this statement be issued as an official document of the conference.

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