

**Statement of Ambassador Thomas Schieb Permanent Representative of Germany to the  
OPCW at EC-108 under agenda item 6 (c)**

Germany commends the Foreign Minister of the Syrian interim-government for having made his way to The Hague and for attending the Council session on Wednesday. This was an encouraging confirmation of the new government's commitment to cooperate with the OPCW and to comply with its obligations under the Convention.

Germany is aware that the elimination of the remainders of the Assad regime's CW program is just one of the many enormous challenges Syria is currently facing, whose people have suffered under the regime of the Assad family for so long. We understand that it seems unfair that the new government is now responsible for cleaning up the dangerous toxic waste left behind by the old regime. All the more it is to be commended that the new government treats the closure of the CW file as one of its priorities.

We also would like to congratulate the Syrian government for having appointed Mr. Ibrahim Olabi, their special adviser on legal matters, as OPCW focal point. We highly appreciate Mr. Olabi's extraordinary commitment and energy, and his immediate setting to work in order to facilitate the rapid start of the OPCW mission.

As has been said by many, the elimination of the Syrian cw program once and for all is a historic opportunity, and we have to live up to the task. This is a joint effort, and the Council should not shy away from expressing its full support of this important endeavor.

Germany calls on all States Parties in a position to do so to support the TS in its work to ensure that Syria can meet its obligations under the Convention. Germany stands ready to support the TS as we did in earlier cases.

No doubt, the process of securing, verifying and subsequently destroying the remainders of the Assad regime's CW program will be a highly complex process which needs to be prepared and carried out with circumspection. At the same time, as we have heard, the risk of proliferation remains considerable. As long as the many sites in question have not been secured, there is a significant risk that the remaining cw, precursors and other toxic chemicals could fall into the wrong hands. This is why there is no time to lose.

It is reassuring to hear that the first TS team will deploy shortly, in order to establish a OPCW mission that will support Syria to address the immediate cw proliferation risks as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairperson,

We would like to thank the DG and the TS once again for the enormous efforts they have been putting into preparing the ground for this important OPCW mission to be established without any further delay. And we are very grateful to Qatar for all its good offices as we are to the Netherlands that was instrumental in providing protection during the DG's timely visit to Damascus on 8 February.

Concluding, I would like to emphasize that Germany is of the view that, in due time, the Council should assess whether the conditions have been met to restore the Syrian Arab Republic as a State Party in good standing.

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