



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF AUSTRALIA, CANADA AND NEW ZEALAND (CANZ) AT THE ONE HUNDRED AND TENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

AGENDA SUBITEM 6(C): ELIMINATION OF THE SYRIAN CHEMICAL WEAPONS PROGRAMME

Thank you, Chair. I have the honour of addressing the Council today on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

CANZ welcomes the work undertaken since the last meeting of the Executive Council to make progress on identifying and inspecting remnants of chemical weapons in Syria after the collapse of the Assad regime, and for preparations to verify their destruction. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons' Syria Missions have consistently delivered high-quality, impartial work in line with the Convention, despite an extraordinarily challenging operating environment. We thank the Secretariat for its briefings on recent deployments to Syria.

We also appreciate the efforts of parties whose sustained engagement has enabled progress – including the Syrian authorities' cooperation with the Technical Secretariat, Qatar for its constructive role representing Syria's interests, and to partners for providing financial and in-kind support.

While we see positive steps forward, let us remind ourselves that we are at a critical juncture. We have been presented with a window of opportunity to eliminate chemical weapons in Syria once and for all, and we must take that opportunity. A failure to act decisively will heighten the very real risk of proliferation, with grave consequences for our collective peace, stability and prosperity.

We cannot allow the momentum to falter. We urge all States Parties to reaffirm their commitment and strengthen their cooperation to enable the full and irreversible elimination of chemical weapons in Syria. This includes providing sufficient resources to the Technical Secretariat to fulfil its clear mandate in Syria.

CANZ welcomes and supports the draft decision presently before the Council that enables the expedited on-site destruction of chemical weapons in Syria in specific situations. It is important both the Syrian Arab Republic and the Technical Secretariat – through the Office for Special Missions and its mandates – are empowered and have the capability and the authority to work together to locate, declare, and verifiably and irreversibly destroy any remaining chemical weapons.

The decision before the Council achieves just this. It will support the ultimate objective of eliminating chemical weapons in Syria, while also allowing for the collection and preservation of evidence necessary for attribution and eventual accountability for chemical weapons use in Syria.

Chair, CANZ reiterates its enduring support for the full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Chemical weapons are inhumane and threaten all our livelihoods. We remain committed to transparency, accountability, and full compliance with the Convention, including in Syria, to support global peace, stability and prosperity. Thank you, Chair.