

Statement by H.E. Olivier Belle, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Belgium to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) at the 110th session of the Executive Council of the States Parties under agenda item 5 (general debate)

The customary thanks.

Belgium would first like to commend the work of the Organisation's Technical Secretariat.

The multilateral scene is being shaken by severe turbulence. That is an understatement. It is increasingly tending towards multiparticularism, which is driving the actors further and further away from solutions that should be inspired by the general interest. A world free of chemical weapons is in the general interest, as is the easing of global tensions through justice and respect for international law, of which the Chemical Weapons Convention is an integral part.

In this unstable environment for multilateralism and international organisations, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons can serve as an example to demonstrate the added value of a technical international organisation.

The Syrian matter offers a unique opportunity to do so.

In this regard, we would like to commend the efforts of the Syrian authorities and Qatar's commitment to advancing this issue. We have examined the draft decision proposed for adoption during this Executive Council meeting, concerning, among other things, the possibility of proceeding with the expeditious on-site destruction of the remaining chemical weapons discovered in Syria. This draft decision is a fine example of fruitful collaboration between the Technical Secretariat, Syria and Qatar. As such, Belgium has decided to co-sponsor the draft decision.

With regard to the biennial budget, Belgium will join the consensus on the consolidated version proposed for adoption, even though it would have preferred a more ambitious regular budget, in particular to enable the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to meet the challenge of eliminating chemical weapons and preventing new production in general, and in Syria in particular.

As for the Russian-Ukrainian matter, we condemn Russia's use of riot control agents as a method of warfare, which is explicitly prohibited by the Convention. We also remain very concerned about the alleged use of the suffocating agent chloropicrin against Ukrainian soldiers.

Given the gravity of the situation, corroborated by Technical Assistance Visit reports, and in order to strengthen the global norm against the use of chemical weapons, Belgium urges the Technical Secretariat to now focus on the formal attribution of responsibility and the identification of perpetrators so that they can be held accountable.

Finally, I would like to conclude by addressing the election of the next Director-General of the Organisation. Belgium calls on all members of the Executive Council to work in good faith to

identify a consensus candidate. Once selected, this person will need the support of all members of the Organisation in order to carry out the OPCW's mission.

Thank you.

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