



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

AGENDA SUBITEM 10 (e): BUDGET DECISION AND THE OFFICE OF SPECIAL MISSIONS

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

This week Council is asked to recommend a budget decision to the Conference which makes significant changes to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organisation's ability to respond to special cases. The budget decision has taken a lot of work to reach a consensus. Even amongst CANZ, we have differed on some of the choices which the OPCW must make.

However, CANZ is united in stating our support for the Director General's decision, on his authority, to establish the Office of Special Missions and to task it with the mandates which previously had been held by the Declaration Assessment Team, the Fact-Finding Mission, and the Investigation and Identification Team. We support his decision to also task the OSM with coordinating the Secretariat's readiness to carry out a Challenge Inspection or an Investigation of Alleged Use.

The OSM permits additional efficiencies for the OPCW's work in Syria, and lets it consolidate administrative and support functions. It should make it easier for the OPCW to coordinate its own work and coordinate with the Syrian Arab Republic. The OPCW leadership and the Director of the OSM should keep in mind the distinct mandates, and work to retain the specific investigative expertise gained through the parallel operation of three separate missions for many years.

The IIT function has established practices and draws on investigative legal capabilities which – up until now – the Office of the Legal Advisor has not held, and which neither the DAT nor the FFM have dealt with. The IIT has mandated tasks, including for the preservation of information and its provision to the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism. This work is important for the broader international efforts for accountability for chemical weapons use, which can now go ahead with the cooperation of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The mandates of all three missions and the OSM's work are essential to addressing the many challenges which the OPCW, its members, and Syria face.

In June 2018, the Conference affirmed that "whenever a chemical weapons use occurs on the territory of a State Party, those who were the perpetrators, organisers, sponsors or otherwise involved should be identified." [C-SS-4/DEC.3 para 19] The Conference also decided that "if requested by a State Party investigating a possible chemical weapons use on its territory, [the Director-General] can provide technical expertise to identify those who were perpetrators, organisers, sponsors or otherwise involved in the use of chemicals as weapons." [C-SS-4/DEC.3 para 20] The OSM should be the core of this capability of the OPCW to assist all States Parties. We expect it to be ready to provide this technical expertise when requested by a State Party.

The budget decision proposed establishes a Special Fund for the Syria Missions funded from the regular budget. We welcome the creation of the fund, which reflects the shared commitment of

OPCW members to a world free of chemical weapons, our recognition of the threat of proliferation, and that must act now to help Syria address this risk.

The OPCW can count on the support of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

Thank you, Chair.