



**NEW ZEALAND STATEMENT
BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SUSANNAH GORDON
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE 110th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa [greetings, greetings, greetings to you all].

New Zealand thanks you, Chair, for your leadership of this Council, and welcomes the new colleagues joining us at this session.

New Zealand reaffirms its strong commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention and to the OPCW as the indispensable guardian of its norms. The credibility of this regime depends on our collective resolve to uphold all aspects of the Convention — elimination of stockpiles, robust verification, assistance and protection, and attribution.

Central to this is the effective functioning of the Technical Secretariat. We emphasise the importance of enabling the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat to carry out their responsibilities in full. We continue to value the OPCW's impartiality, professionalism, and independence. The OPCW's credibility and effectiveness depend on our collective respect for its technical expertise and operational autonomy.

New Zealand reiterates that attribution is a core mandate of the OPCW. We strongly support efforts to identify those responsible for the use of chemical weapons, including in Syria and Ukraine. Attribution is not an optional add-on: it is fundamental to the OPCW's ongoing work and the relevance of this regime. The establishment of the Office of Special Missions is a welcome step in integrating attribution and streamlining the Organisation's core structures. We encourage continued support, full cooperation and sufficient resourcing from States Parties for this important work.

In that vein, New Zealand also reiterates the importance of ensuring the OPCW has the resources it needs to fulfil its mandates. We call on all States Parties to commit to the 2026-2027 budget, including collective support to the Syrian Arab Republic in identifying, securing and destroying Assad-era chemical weapons, as well as enabling a higher number of Article VI inspections. The verification regime is at the heart of the Convention, and sufficient resources are essential for OPCW's ongoing credibility and sustainability.

We also stress the importance of passing the decision to allow for the expedited, on-site destruction of chemical weapons in Syria. This is critical to enabling the Technical Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic to move forward with these operations and to uphold the Convention's central objective: the complete elimination of chemical weapons. The Executive Council must demonstrate resolve to ensure these weapons are eliminated safely and without delay.

Looking ahead to the selection of a new Director-General, New Zealand reminds the Executive Council of its responsibility to recommend a consensus candidate to the Conference of States Parties. New Zealand thanks the Chair of the Executive Council for running a fair, transparent and credible process to date. We call on all States Parties to engage constructively for the remainder of the process to ensure that a consensus candidate is appointed without undue delay; and to ensure the Technical Secretariat continues to perform its duties under the strategic vision, expert management and diplomatic skill of a new leader.

Mr Chair, New Zealand remains firmly committed to a world free of chemical weapons and to upholding the principles and objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which is a success story of the international non-proliferation and disarmament system. We stand ready to work constructively with all States Parties and will continue to stand in support of the Technical Secretariat to ensure the OPCW continues to deliver on all of its mandates. We owe it to future generations to ensure the OPCW remains strong, independent, and fully equipped to meet the challenges ahead.

Thank you, Chairperson.