

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR FATMA CEREN YAZGAN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
TO THE OPCW AT THE 110TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE
COUNCIL**

Mr. Chairperson,
Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

We commend H.E. Ambassador Thomas Schieb for his effective Chairmanship of the Council and thank the Director-General for his wise leadership.

It gives me pleasure to address this Council for the first time - in my observer capacity - since I took office. And I sense that this Session will be substantial for the work of the OPCW as it will consider such issues of future Syria activities, appointment of the next Director-General and biennium budget.

As we also heard from the Director-General yesterday, efforts on disarmament and non-proliferation are being challenged by today's volatile international environment. If a world truly free of chemical weapons is within reach, we must protect the global norm against the use of these weapons, as well as strive for the universalization of the CWC, as for such instruments being almost universal is not enough.

This is why it is important that the next Director-General should be committed to uphold the norms and work with States Parties to ensure full compliance with the CWC and towards universalization. We support the Chair in his efforts and handling for a consensus-based decision on a single candidate to be recommended to the Conference of the States Parties for appointment.

Mr. Chair,

Türkiye welcomes the ongoing cooperation and engagement of the Syrian authorities with the OPCW. Syria has also demonstrated its collaboration by facilitating the deployments of the Secretariat teams. Recent discovery of nerve agent and VX after the deployment in April, is worrying and indicates that the Assad regime's chemical weapons program is more than a myth.

Türkiye stands ready to contribute to the training and capacity-building of Syrian experts and will continue to facilitate the work of the OPCW missions in the field. And regarding a draft decision on expedited on-site destruction which we support and co-sponsor, I would like to underline the importance of consultation and coordination with interested neighboring countries during the process as well as ensuring safety of people and protecting the environment.

Syrian people have been the victims of chemical weapons. Türkiye welcomes Syria's commitment to hold accountable those responsible for the use of chemical weapons and support Syrian-led and Syrian-owned efforts to this end. Türkiye in fact has been instrumental and played a key role by facilitating the work of the FFM and IIT. We also attended the recently held "Third Syrian Civil Society International Conference on Chemical Weapons" in Damascus through our Embassy there.

Mr. Chair,

We recall Israeli airstrikes on Syria which is another challenge given that they destroyed some suspected sites and potential evidence. These attacks also jeopardized the safety and security of the OPCW missions and its personnel while delaying a deployment. Israel's continued military actions in Syria as one of the few CWC non-parties undermine the territorial integrity and unity of Syria.

While we are cautiously optimistic about the prospect of peace in the Middle East, we condemn Israel's continued military actions in Gaza which in our assessment amount to genocide. We call on the Secretariat to continue to monitor the situation in occupied Palestine where Israel's alleged use of chemical agents is against the norms and principles of the CWC.

In this context, we support Palestine's request from the Secretariat for a technical assistance visit (TAV). We also take note of Palestine's view that this cannot wait until bridging the capacity gap.

Mr. Chair,

We reaffirm our full commitment to sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and a just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

Mr. Chair,

Chemical terrorism remains a source of concern. The risks and threats are very much real considering the non-state actors. We must be vigilant against this threat that may be posed by combined with the efficiency of drones.

We also commend the Secretariat in its efforts to explore the impact of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, on the implementation of the CWC by organizing workshops and establishing a Temporary Working Group. In this regard, we take note of the outcomes and key findings of the “workshop on AI and chemical safety and security management” which was held in China in June this year.

Mr. Chair,

As I conclude, I would like to express that we support a biennial budget that meets the needs of the Secretariat. Accordingly, we join those who want to ensure that the OPCW is fully funded to deliver its core mandate, including Syria activities and verification regime. We welcome the establishment of Special Fund for the Syria Mission in the regular budget. While we understand the trade-offs were difficult, we think it is still too limited.

Thank you.