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**STATEMENT BY MS. ELI JONSVIK
SECTION FOR DISARMAMENT AND NON-PROLIFERATION
NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AT THE SEVENTIETH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madame Chairperson,

Let me first take this opportunity to welcome you back to the Chair, to guide us through some important decisions during this Seventieth Session of the Executive Council.

While working through the many items on this week's agenda that are administrative in nature, it is vital that we do not lose sight of the basic tasks of this Organisation. Destruction is far from completed and will remain the core objective of this Organisation for years to come. The Russian Federation, the United States of America, as well as Libya, have yet to complete their obligations as mandated by the Convention. Similarly, universality has not yet been fully achieved.

Syria's recent admission that it possesses a stockpile of chemical weapons has caused great concern. The presence of chemical weapons in Syria shows that the threat of chemical weapons is still very real. Norway urges Syria to act responsibly in relation to these abhorrent weapons, not to use them under any circumstances, and to keep them secure. International law, binding also for Syria, strictly prohibits the use of chemical weapons.

We encourage the Director-General, with the support of the Technical Secretariat, to continue to follow the situation closely and to maintain the necessary readiness to cooperate with any request from the United Nations Secretary-General, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention and the Relationship Agreement between the UN and the OPCW.

Even if the Chemical Weapons Convention has already created a very strong norm against these weapons, we must continue working towards universality. Norway calls upon the remaining eight States not Party to ratify or accede to the Convention without delay. We, the States Parties, should promote the Convention in our bilateral contacts and continue to support the Technical Secretariat in its universalisation efforts.

As one or several more non-States Parties join the Convention, there will be an increased need for verification. It is crucial that we make sure the OPCW maintains the necessary



capacity for current and future tasks and remains the world's knowledge repository in the field of chemical weapons.

Norway recognises that some Member States need international assistance to ensure full implementation of the Convention according to the obligations pursuant to Article VII. This issue is closely related to national capacity building and skills development in areas related to the peaceful use of chemistry and hence to the implementation of Article XI. Norway strongly supports the various programmes related to international cooperation and assistance (ICA). Over the years, Norway has made various substantial voluntary contributions to encourage this, recently to support the OPCW Africa Programme's activities related to capacity building in relation to Articles VII, X and XI.

In light of the substantial funds at its disposal, both through the regular budget and through voluntary contributions, we must ensure that the ICA programme retains its administrative capacity in order to manage the financial resources responsibly.

We hope that this session of the Executive Council will conclude the discussions on the OPCW Programme and Budget for 2013. Regarding the proposed new Strategy and Policy subprogramme, Norway would have preferred that the creation of the new unit was postponed until after the Third Review Conference in order to make sure that the reorganisation serves to promote the policies chiselled out by the States Parties. However, we accept it is within the Director-General's purview to establish such an office.

Let me make it clear that Norway supports reinstating the reclassification authority of the Director-General in order to make necessary adjustments to the organisational structure of the OPCW. At the same time, we would like to underline that openness and transparency on the reclassification of positions, as in all administrative processes, is very important.

For Norway, openness and transparency is more than mere words. We are convinced that this Convention could benefit from the experience of several other conventions which include relevant stakeholders and civil society organisations in their work, in order to ensure ownership and engagement. The recent Third Meeting of States Parties of the Cluster Munitions Convention in Oslo is a good example. On this background, we were pleased to see a special session for industry dialogue as part of the preparations leading up to the Third Review Conference. However, we also need a more inclusive approach towards other civil society actors.

Madame Chairperson, we would like to commend you for the positive talks we have had on the working methods of the Council. Such discussions are surely helpful in increasing efficiency and the substantive output of our work.

Finally, may we request that this statement is circulated as an official document of the Seventieth Session the Executive Council.

Thank you.