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UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

**STATEMENT BY MR JOHN FOGGO
HEAD OF DELEGATION
AT THE SEVENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
REGARDING THE SITUATION IN SYRIA**

Mr Chairman,

The United Kingdom is grateful for the Director-General's comprehensive and informative opening statement, and in particular his update on the OPCW's activities in support of the fact-finding investigation initiated by the United Nations Secretary-General into alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria.

We still believe that this serious issue warrants a separate item on the use of chemical weapons in Syria on the agenda of this session of the Council. We are also convinced that this Council will in the future have to address this important issue which is entirely relevant to the object and purpose of our Convention.

We welcome and encourage the activity by the OPCW to support the UN investigation. The UK has demonstrated its support by, along with France and the United States, sharing relevant information that we hold, with the UN team. Evidence has been accumulating in recent months and we believe there is now conclusive evidence showing that the Assad regime has used—and continues to use—chemical weapons, including sarin.

We are deeply concerned at this evident continuing use of chemical weapons. Most recently, we have seen further—as yet unconfirmed—reports of chemical attacks in Homs. It is ever more urgent that the UN investigation team be allowed unfettered access to investigate all such reports fully.

We understand Syria has invited the United Nations to Damascus to discuss the terms of reference for the investigation into allegations of chemical weapons use in Syria. We support the UN Secretary-General's call for Syria to allow unfettered access to the UN Investigation Mission without further delay and without any conditions. Particularly as the investigation is time-sensitive and further delay caused by Syria's refusal to co-operate fully may affect the ability of the investigation mission to look at all the relevant evidence.

The use of chemical weapons—by any party—is unacceptable and morally abhorrent. We continue to stress that those who use these weapons, or order their use, will be held to account.



The UK will continue to assist the UN investigation and work with international partners to get more and better information, and we will continue to support the efforts of the OPCW in providing the UN with their technical expertise.

Mr Chairman,

I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session of the Council.

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