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NORWAY

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ANNIKEN KRUTNES
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NORWAY TO THE OPCW
AT THE SEVENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chair,

Let me start by welcoming you to the Chair. We look forward to you taking us through the day. Less than two weeks ago, this Executive Council adopted a historic decision on the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, showing the world that the OPCW is still relevant. Already, we have the first reports from the team of inspectors in Syria. The rapidness and professionalism of this Organisation is impressive.

I would like to reiterate the thankfulness I expressed last week towards Professor Åke Sellström and his team for their work in Syria, and towards Russia and the United States for their tireless diplomatic efforts in working out a framework for Syrian chemical weapon destruction. I would also like to thank the Director-General for his leadership during these challenging times. Not least I would like to pay tribute to the inspectors and other staff in Syria who are currently working under dangerous conditions.

Norway welcomes Syria's decision to accede to the Convention. We urge the Syrian government to translate this commitment into action and to ensure the security of the United Nations-OPCW teams in their country. We expect Syria to fully cooperate with the provisions of the decisions made in the United Nations Security Council and here in the Executive Council of the OPCW.

While the most important task for the Council in the near future will no doubt be to oversee the implementation of its decision on Syria taken at the extraordinary Thirty-Third Meeting, 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. We urge them to continue to strive towards meeting their destruction targets in an expedient and transparent manner, and appreciate the information given by the distinguished representative of the United States on the issue in his intervention this morning.

Similarly, universality has not yet been fully achieved. Norway welcomes in this regard the statement of President Peres of Israel last week, saying that his country will consider



carefully the possibility of joining the OPCW. We urge all the remaining States not Party to ratify or accede and become members of the OPCW. Norway is prepared to offer its assistance in this regard.

We look forward to continuing the discussions on the OPCW Programme and Budget for 2014. We fully understand that the implementation of the decision on chemical weapons in Syria will affect the budget and has delayed its planning process. We accept that the scope of expenses cannot be defined before the inspectors have made their initial investigations and reported back. As soon as the need for additional resources is clarified, Norway will be ready to contribute.

An important task ahead is to ensure implementation of the decisions taken at the Third Review Conference. We look forward to following up the updated matrix document outlining the many actionable items from the report of the Third Review Conference. We encourage the facilitators to make sure that the relevant items are brought into their respective consultations.

As one, or hopefully several, more non-States Parties join the Convention, there will be an increased need for verification. It is crucial that the OPCW maintains the necessary capacity for current and future tasks and remains the world's knowledge repository in the field of chemical weapons. The OPCW must also develop further the technical capabilities, expertise and necessary preparedness to respond swiftly and effectively to any request for a challenge inspection or investigation of alleged use.

On this occasion I would like to underline once more that openness and transparency in all administrative processes are of importance to Norway. So is the inclusion of relevant stakeholders and civil society organisations in the work of the OPCW, in order to ensure ownership and engagement. The activities of the Technical Secretariat with regards to education and outreach are important in this regard.

Finally, may I request that this statement be treated as an official document of the Seventy-Fourth Session of the Executive Council.

Thank you.

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