



OPCW

Executive Council

Seventy-Fourth Session
8 – 11 October 2013

EC-74/NAT.8
8 October 2013
ENGLISH and RUSSIAN only

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
AT THE SEVENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

The current session, without any doubt, is marked by the historic decision to eliminate chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, adopted on 27 September at the Thirty-Third Meeting of the Executive Council. We believe that today the main task of the OPCW Technical Secretariat, members of the Executive Council, and other States Parties to the Convention is to do everything we can for the successful and timely implementation of this decision. We must do this because of the emergency situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, in which the process of the elimination of the chemical weapons, which must be verified by the OPCW mission, will be carried out, and due to the need to complete this process as soon as possible under strict verification by the Organisation.

We believe that all members of the Executive Council are unanimous in the view that the OPCW should play a central role in the Syrian mission with appropriate assistance and support from the United Nations. For this purpose the Organisation should have all it needs - physical and financial capabilities, professional and dedicated staff, a clear vision of the goals and objectives of the mission, the unconditional support of States Parties in all aspects and at all stages of operations in the Syrian Arab Republic. We are convinced that the OPCW will be up to the challenge if it strictly follows the provisions of the decision adopted by the Executive Council on 27 September and will focus on the prompt and effective fulfilment of the practical tasks associated with the conduct of the mission in the Syrian Arab Republic, without being distracted by the unnecessary political discussions on topics which are not within the competence of the Organisation.

We are pleased to note that during the time that has elapsed since the adoption of the decision at the Thirty-Third Meeting of Executive Council some important steps in pursuance of its goals and objectives have already been taken both by the Syrian Arab Republic and by the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW, as well as a number of States Parties. The positive assessment of the level of interaction between the Syrian authorities and the Joint UN-OPCW Mission in this country is well known. This was mentioned by representatives of many countries, including Russia and the United States - the co-authors of the Geneva Framework Agreement of 14 September.

However, while planning further work on the implementation of the decision of the Executive Council we should understand - naturally without forgetting about the obligations of the Syrian Arab Republic as a possessor State - that Damascus does not have all the necessary



knowledge, experience, technical capabilities and sufficient financial resources for the speedy and safe elimination of its chemical arsenals. In addition, the course of this process will undoubtedly be influenced by a very complex internal and external situation. In this regard, we believe that international assistance, that many States have already expressed the willingness to provide, would be quite necessary. We are convinced that all Member States to the OPCW should be interested in reaching this noble goal of eliminating these deadly weapons in one of the Middle Eastern States in the shortest possible time and without any complications.

Resolution 2118 adopted by the United Nations Security Council on 27 September urged all Syrian parties and interested Member States with relevant capabilities to work closely together and with the OPCW and the United Nations to arrange for the security of the mission in the Syrian Arab Republic and the earliest possible destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles in this State.

Thus the decision of the United Nations Security Council and the decision of the Executive Council of the OPCW are directed not only at the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, but at all parties involved in the conflict, all interested States, and, above all, the Syrian Arab Republic's neighbours in the region.

Therefore, we cannot help but be alarmed by the threats aimed at OPCW personnel from the Syrian opposition, the intentions not to grant OPCW inspectors access to territory controlled by opposition groups, and not to allow them to fulfil the mandate prescribed by the decisions of the United Nations and the OPCW.

In this context we call on all States to exercise appropriate and rigorous influence on the conflicting parties in the Syrian Arab Republic, above all on the extremist groups of the intransigent armed opposition, in order to ensure the safety of operations to inspect the chemical weapons storage sites and to verify the subsequent destruction of such weapons.

Russia continues to fulfil its obligations to destroy the remaining stockpiles of chemical weapons. We are committed to completing this process in accordance with the obligations we have assumed. We believe the other possessor States operate on the same understanding.

Since the July session of the Executive Council we have destroyed 848 tonnes of Category 1 chemical weapons, or 2.2% of our initial stocks. Thus, to date Russia has destroyed 30,639 tonnes of Category 1 chemical weapons, or 76.7% of the initially declared quantity. Detailed information on the status of implementation of the Russian programme will be presented under item 6 of the agenda of this session of the Executive Council.

In the intersessional period at the invitation of the Chinese and Japanese sides a delegation of the Executive Council visited one of the abandoned chemical weapons destruction sites in China. We as one of the delegations that took part in this event wish to express our appreciation to the organisers of the visit for the opportunity to see first hand the progress of destruction of abandoned Japanese chemical weapons, to duly appreciate the magnitude of efforts being made by China and Japan in this regard and to better understand the associated technical and organisational challenges, as well as concerns over the hazards posed by these arsenals for the environment and local population in China.

The Russian Federation welcomes the continuation of work on national implementation of the Convention under Article VII. Recently, a new step was taken to achieve the objective of full and comprehensive implementation of the Convention – the Director-General provided information which enables us to look at the status of national implementation from the point of view of fulfilment of initial and additional measures.

We believe this useful initiative will give a new impetus to OPCW activities in this area and help Member States to make progress in adopting required legislation pursuant to the Convention. The Russian Federation is committed to finding and implementing together with other States Parties of new efficient tools for promoting progress in this process.

The Russian Federation attaches great importance to the subject of retaining international expertise and knowledge in destruction of chemical weapons and verification of chemical industry to prevent a resumption of production of chemical warfare agents in full conformity with the recommendations to that effect contained in the report of the Third Review Conference. In this context we welcome the development of the concept of a knowledge management centre in the field of CWC implementation.

However, we believe that even before adopting a decision to establish such a centre it would be important to clarify a number of practical issues, which, in our view, would allow the improvement of the effectiveness of these efforts and minimise the probability of duplication of functions in the Organisation. In this context we are ready to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Technical Secretariat and all interested States Parties.

The Russian Federation expresses its satisfaction with the work of Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü as Director-General of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW during his first term of office. We believe that his experience, commitment to the goals and objectives of the Organisation and his well-deserved authority in international circles will allow him to successfully cope with the new tasks and challenges which the Organisation has been recently confronted with. For our part, we stand ready to render him every possible support.

To conclude, Mr Chairman, allow me to assure you that you can count on the cooperation of the Russian delegation during this session of the Executive Council.

We ask that this statement be distributed as an official document of the Seventy-Fourth Session of the Executive Council.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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