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UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

**STATEMENT BY MR JOHN FOGGO, HEAD OF THE UK NATIONAL AUTHORITY
AT THE SEVENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the distinguished Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic on behalf of the European Union.

The United Kingdom welcomes the Director-General's latest report on the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. We are also grateful for the briefing given by Special Coordinator Ms Kaag this morning.

Despite several further shipments in recent days, the process to remove Syria's chemical stockpile from the country remains considerably behind schedule. Let us remember that all chemical material was due to be removed from Syria by 5 February. These delays are threatening the 30 June deadline and are resulting in significant additional costs to States Parties that have generously offered in-kind support to the OPCW-UN Joint Mission.

The Director-General has once again made clear that all of the elements required for the removal of the remaining chemicals from Syria are in place. We urge Syria to shorten still further their revised timetable for removal, so that the 30 June deadline can be met.

Syria now needs to demonstrate their cooperation and commitment to the Joint Mission through concerted action, and must accelerate the removal of the remaining chemicals from the country through systematic and sustained shipments in the shortest period possible. We will judge Syria on their actions to transport the chemicals, not their promises.

We urge the Council to continue to strictly monitor Syrian progress through the weekly OPCW reports.

On a related issue, we welcome the draft decision circulated to Executive Council members by the United States of America, which outlines a plan for the destruction of the twelve chemical weapons production facilities. We urge Syria to accept this advice and the revised timeline and take the necessary steps to physically destroy all twelve facilities. Without a new decision, Syria risks missing a further deadline set by this Council. Syria cannot unilaterally ignore this requirement. Anything less than physical destruction will not meet the Convention's standards and cannot therefore be accepted.



Executive Council decision EC-M-35/DEC.2, dated 29 November 2013, in which the Executive Council decided that the requests for conversion of Syrian chemical weapons production facilities were no longer pending, illustrated that no Council member was prepared to agree to the conversion requests. It might perhaps be couched in diplomatic language, but it was a clear rejection of the prospect of conversion. It follows that destruction is the only way forward for these facilities. The Convention has no other avenues to be explored.

Finally, Mr Chairman, the United Kingdom is grateful for the continued efforts of the staff of the OPCW and the Joint Mission to enable and oversee the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons programme.

We would also like to give thanks to all those States which have provided either in-kind or cash resources to support the mission. The Joint Mission in Syria is a truly international effort which would not be possible without the generosity of so many States Parties. We are all working together to rid the world of these horrific weapons, and we re-assert that now we need actions, not promises, from Syria in order to eliminate these weapons by 30 June.

Mr Chairman, I request that this statement be issued as an official document of this session of the Council.

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