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SAUDI ARABIA

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SAUDI ARABIA TO THE OPCW AT THE SEVENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Mr Chairperson,
Excellency, the Director-General,
Dear colleagues,

The delegation of my country associates itself with the statement made this morning on behalf of the States Parties that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement and China by His Excellency the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who will be leaving us after the completion of work of the current session of the Council. I take this opportunity to express to His Excellency our thanks and appreciation for his contribution to the work of the Council and wish him every success in his upcoming position.

Saudi Arabia reiterates the importance of implementing the requirements of the Chemical Weapons Convention in an effective and non-discriminatory manner, in the belief that this will effectively contribute to the reinforcement of international peace and security. The commitment of my country to the Convention and its interest in its implementation at the national and international levels reflect its policy of effectively contributing to the efforts made for the prohibition and non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction, thus making the Middle East a zone free of these lethal weapons. On several occasions, my country has called upon the international community to provide the necessary support for achieving this objective, which is a legitimate right of peoples of the region, and a major support for its security and stability. My country has also attached great attention to the efforts made to eliminate weapons of mass destruction at the regional level. In this context, my country will host from 6 to 8 April an advanced training course for the personnel of the national authorities in Asia, who are tasked with the national implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The achievement made under the Chemical Weapons Convention since the adoption of the plan of action for the universality of the Convention in October 2003 is commendable. It is pleasing to note that the number of States Parties to the Convention has reached 190, which underlines the wide respect for the Convention at the international level and the great support provided to its noble objectives including protection of mankind from the use or threat of use of chemical weapons. We reiterate our call to the states which have not yet acceded to the Convention to do so as soon as possible.

Saudi Arabia believes with certainty that the non-completion of the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles by possessor States is a source of concern for all. Indeed, it puts the



credibility of the Convention at stake. The completion of destruction by possessor States of their weapons stockpiles remains the highest priority of our Organisation and contributes to the reinforcement of international peace and security. In this respect, the delegation of my country welcomes the announcement by His Excellency the OPCW Director-General in his opening statement this morning that Libya had successfully completed destruction of its Category 1 chemical weapons stockpile. However, we still feel uncomfortable about the elapse of the final extended deadline set for the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles by the possessor States. We believe that efforts should be redoubled to achieve this goal. The possessor States concerned are called to fulfil their obligations as early as possible and to intensify their efforts to dispose of their stockpiles within the deadlines already specified, in line with the measures set forth in the decision of the Conference of the States Parties at its Sixteenth Session and in accordance with the relevant decisions of the OPCW Executive Council. We firmly believe that wider opportunities concerning the future priorities of the Organisation will be created only when the full destruction of these stockpiles is actually completed. In this connection, the delegation of my country commends the important role played by the OPCW Technical Secretariat in the verification of destruction and we call upon all to support, and reinforce this role in order for the Technical Secretariat to be able to perform its duties as required.

The delegation of my country considered the fifth report submitted by the Director-General on the progress made in eliminating the Syrian chemical weapons programme, in accordance with the decisions of the Executive Council at its Thirty-Third and Thirty-Forth meetings. It also took note of the statement made last Friday by the Special Coordinator of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic, Ms Sigrid Kaag and of her briefing this morning on the transportation of the fifth shipment of priority chemicals to Latakia. The delegation of my country wishes to express its appreciation for the great efforts made by the OPCW-UN Joint Mission and its team of experts working on the ground in the Syrian Arab Republic under extraordinary work circumstances. However, this does not dispel our deep concern for the elapse of the deadline for the removal of chemicals outside the Syrian Arab Republic as specified in the Executive Council decision of last November. The slow steps in removing chemical weapons from the Syrian Arab Republic are a source of concern for the international community in general, and the States Parties in particular. The Syrian regime has failed so far to meet the deadline of 31 December 2013 for eliminating certain materials and that of 5 February 2014 for other materials, with the exception of isopropanol for which the destruction deadline was agreed to be 1 March 2014, as set forth in the decision taken by the Executive Council last November on the detailed requirements for the destruction of chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities. This calls into question the seriousness of the Syrian regime in fulfilling its commitments. The delegation of my country appreciates the efforts made by the OPCW Operational Planning Group to shorten as much as possible the time for the removal of chemicals outside the Syrian territory, taking into account what has been stated by the Director-General in his report before us that the Syrian Arab Republic has now in its possession all the equipment needed for the removal of the declared chemicals outside the Syrian territory. On the other hand, the delegation of my country emphasises that the Syrian regime should comply with the decision of the Executive Council, especially with regard to the destruction of chemical weapons production facilities by the 15th of this month, despite the doubts we have about such compliance. The weak pretexts used by the Syrian regime to delay destruction of these facilities at the specified time, such as the security situation and the destruction impact on the surrounding environment, etc., has deepened these doubts. The Syrian regime is required to immediately fulfil its obligations without delaying tactics, in accordance with the decision of the Executive

Council and Security Council Resolution 2118. What is needed is action rather than additional plans, statements or good intentions.

In this respect, the delegation of my country expresses its regret that the Council could not reach consensus on an appropriate language for the final reports of its Thirty-Eight and Thirty-Ninth meetings held last January and February respectively. This reflects the concerns of most of the delegations about the delay in removing chemical weapons from the Syrian Arab Republic, and emphasises the importance of completing the destruction of production facilities within the already specified deadlines. The continuing lack of consensus on a final report for the work of our Council may negatively impact the credibility of this Organisation with regard to destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons.

It is clear that the Convention puts emphasis on economic and technological development as well as on international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited thereunder. While we appreciate past efforts in this respect, we are of the view that further efforts need to be made urgently to achieve the requirements of Article XI of the Convention, particularly with regard to transfer of technology, equipment and expertise related to chemical industries not prohibited under the Convention to developing countries, and removing barriers put up by many industrially developed countries in this respect. This will contribute to promoting international economic development and bringing about benefits for all parties, especially in this global economic crisis. Addressing such a crisis and mitigating its impact, especially on developing countries, requires—without doubt—that international cooperation be promoted in different areas.

We are all fully aware of the technical nature of the work of our Organisation, as well as the limits of its mandate and the tasks and responsibilities assigned to it. We believe that this role played by the Organisation together with the effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention by the States Parties will effectively contribute to the international efforts aiming at combating terrorism at the international level.

Finally, I wish that this statement be circulated as one of the official documents of the Seventy-Fifth Session of the Executive Council and be published on the OPCW official website.

I thank you for your kind attention.

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