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**SWITZERLAND**

**STATEMENT BY MR PHILIPPE BRANDT  
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SWITZERLAND TO THE OPCW AT  
THE SEVENTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

Since this is the first time I take the floor, let me welcome you as Chairperson of the Executive Council and convey to you the congratulations of the Swiss delegation for your election. You can count on its full support to carry out your mandate.

I would like to make comments on two points.

With regard to the removal of Syrian chemical weapons, Switzerland takes note of the Director-General's report delivered yesterday, and welcomes the fact that the transport of the declared chemicals out of the Syrian Arab Republic was finally completed at the end of June. This is a crucial step on the path of complete destruction of the Syrian arsenal, which is now on track; we welcome this development and wish to thank the Director-General as well as the OPCW and United Nations staff involved in this operation for the tremendous efforts thus made.

Of course, my delegation deplores the delays accumulated since the beginning of this unprecedented operation, some of which most certainly could have been avoided despite the volatile security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. Furthermore, Switzerland deeply regrets that the irreversible destruction of the chemical weapons production facilities has not taken place as scheduled. We also strongly hope that the Fact-Finding Mission can quickly return to work in the best possible conditions, in order to subsequently highlight the responsibilities arising from the totally unacceptable use of toxic chemicals against civilian population in the Syrian Arab Republic. When the time comes—and we shall be working tirelessly—those responsible for these acts will be brought to justice. Moreover, we hope that the issues related to the Syrian initial declaration will be clarified once and for all at the earliest possible time, in order to eliminate remaining doubts.

We are all aware, Mr Chairperson, that the work in the Syrian Arab Republic is far from over and unfortunately there is still much work to be done. Vigilance is still called for.

The issue of education and outreach is of great importance to us. Indeed, we believe that education and outreach will play a significant part in the future. The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize as well as the operation in the Syrian Arab Republic have placed the OPCW in the limelight and highlighted its contribution to disarmament and non-proliferation. We must



take advantage of this momentum and fulfil its potential. Therefore, Switzerland wishes to thank both the Argentinian delegation for its initiative to include this item on the agenda of this Council session, and the Director-General for his note on the activities undertaken in this context. I also would like to refer to the conclusions of the Third Review Conference as well as to the recent findings of SAB, which stated that the Nobel Peace Prize and the Centenary of the first large-scale use of industrial chemical weapons in 2015 represent a unique opportunity to globally promote the OPCW and its aims. We must ensure that the work programme for 2015 reflects this issue adequately.

Finally, I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session of the Executive Council.

Thank you.

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