



OPCW

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NEW ZEALAND

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF NEW ZEALAND AT
THE SEVENTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Thank you Mr Chairman.

New Zealand was very pleased to see the last of the Syrian Arab Republic's declared chemical weapons stockpile removed from its territory on 23 June. This does represent a significant delay in the time frame for the complete elimination of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons programme set out in United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) and the corresponding Executive Council decision. Nevertheless removal of the chemicals from Syrian territory is a significant milestone in this process, and we applaud it.

However, much remains to be done.

New Zealand welcomes the Director-General's factual report to this session on progress to date in the destruction and removal of the Syrian Arab Republic's declared chemical weapons, and we appreciate the ongoing work of the Technical Secretariat's declaration assessment team in seeking to clarify gaps and discrepancies in the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration. These efforts help to build confidence as we work towards the complete elimination of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemicals weapons programme.

We welcome news that the destruction of the Syrian Arab Republic's declared chemicals has begun. In particular, New Zealand appreciates the contributions of the governments of China, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States of America to this important task. We look forward to receiving regular updates from the Technical Secretariat as the destruction process moves ahead.

Unfortunately, we have seen less progress on the destruction of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons production facilities. As others have pointed out, ensuring that these structures can never again be used for the production of chemical weapons is fundamental to building the confidence of the international community in the complete elimination of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons programme. We appreciate your efforts, Mr Chairman, to find a consensus solution to this issue and we hope and expect to see decisions taken and progress made in the course of this Council session.

New Zealand is deeply concerned about reports of renewed use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. In that regard, we welcome the Director-General's decision to continue the work of the Fact-Finding Mission investigating the alleged use of chlorine in the



Syrian Arab Republic, and the inclusion of the Fact-Finding Mission's summary report on the agenda of this Council session.

The Syrian Arab Republic continues to dominate the work of this Council, but we see value in recognising the important work of the organisation across a range of areas. Looking at the broader agenda for this session, we would like to make particular mention of efforts towards full implementation of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention by its signatories. New Zealand knows, given our close relationships with our Pacific Island neighbours, the challenges faced by small and developing States with limited resources in implementing the Convention. In this regard, we were pleased to contribute to and participate in the recent workshop organised by Australia and the OPCW for National Authorities of States Parties in Pacific Island States. The workshop included a special module on drafting and preparing national implementing legislation and was a useful step towards the goal of achieving full implementation of the Convention in our region.

Thank you Mr Chairman.

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