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**NORWAY**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ANNIKEN KRUTNES  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NORWAY TO THE OPCW  
AT THE SEVENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson, Director-General, distinguished delegates,

Norway has contributed heavily to the international operation to eliminate the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons and notes with satisfaction its positive outcome. We are however, dismayed by the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. A lasting solution to the crisis urgently requires a solution.

Norway is deeply concerned that the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission has confirmed recent systematic and repeated use of chlorine gas against civilians in the Syrian Arab Republic. The use of this toxic chemical as a weapon is a clear breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Norway supports the intention of the Director-General to have the Fact-Finding Mission continue its work and remains determined to sanction those responsible for the horrific acts.

We call upon the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with the UNOPS and the OPCW to achieve the destruction of the remaining production facilities. We also urge the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with the OPCW assessment team regarding the verification of its declarations of chemical weapons and of the discrepancies therein.

While the most important issue for the Council in the near future will remain the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, we must not lose sight of the basic tasks of this Organisation. Implementing the decisions of the Third Review Conference is vital.

Destruction of chemical weapons in the possessor States is another vital task which is far from completed. We urge the Russian Federation, the United States of America, as well as Libya to strive towards meeting their destruction targets in an expedient and transparent manner.

Norway also urges States not Party to the Convention to ratify or accede and become members of the OPCW. And States Parties that have not fully implemented the Convention are urged to do so. We appreciate the work of the Technical Secretariat in this regard and ensure that Norway is prepared to support its activities.



Fostering international cooperation, in the peaceful uses of chemistry and to prevent terrorism, are important goals. For many States Parties these are major incentives to stay engaged with the OPCW. Norway has contributed to the programmes to assist those countries, especially in Africa, and we are ready to continue our support.

Mr Chairperson,

Norway is concerned that the OPCW is facing a diminishing recruitment pool for experienced inspectors. This concern needs to be addressed as a matter of priority. Our recommendation is to continue and extend the outreach capacity building activities of the Secretariat in general and that the Director-General be authorised to rehire designated inspectors in accordance with the Convention and existing staff rules.

Finally, may I request that this statement be treated as an official document of the Seventy-Seventh Session of the Executive Council and be posted on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you.

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