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BELARUS

**STATEMENT BY MR MIKALAI BORYSEVICH
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS TO THE
OPCW AT THE SEVENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

Allow me to again welcome you to your post and sincerely wish you success in your work. I would like to assure you that the Belarusian delegation is prepared to work constructively and cooperatively during this session.

We thank the Director-General Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for his informative report, and the Council's Vice-Chairpersons for their presentations.

The Belarusian delegation would like to align itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

Belarus takes the implementation of its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention very seriously and has repeatedly and in practice demonstrated its commitment to the policy of ensuring global security and intends to continue to remain an active participant in this process. We view universal international agreements in the field of disarmament and security as tools to which there are no alternatives and which are capable of, in practice, setting out common rules of play for all states without exception. This is why we unconditionally uphold the call to remaining states to urgently sign or ratify this most important document. We emphasise that the responsibilities to be taken by these states under the Convention will not only contribute to global security, but will also allow them to participate efficiently in international cooperation in matters concerning the Convention.

The unconditional achievement of the Convention's objectives depends directly on the complete destruction of all of the chemical weapons stockpiles worldwide.

Having noted the significant and steady progress that has already been achieved by possessor States toward the destruction of their respective stockpiles, Belarus expresses its confidence that the very important task of achieving the total elimination of chemical weapons will be accomplished as soon as possible.

Belarus highly commends the efforts of the Syrian Arab Republic in removing and eliminating chemical weapons from its territory. In our opinion, this unprecedented



cooperation within the international community toward the complete removal of chemical weapons from the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the unwavering commitment to this task on the part of OPCW staff, the OPCW-UN Joint Mission, and the Director-General of the OPCW personally deserves praise and gratitude. We are pleased to note that Belarus was among the states that provided assistance in carrying out this important mission.

We maintain our firm position on the absolute condemnation of any use of chemical weapons.

The Belarusian delegation hopes that as the Mission continues to investigate instances in which chlorine-based chemicals were used as a chemical weapon within the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, comprehensive and impartial information will serve as a source and lay the foundation for producing objective and balanced assessments and conclusions. At the same time, we are concerned that reports of the widespread use of chlorine as a chemical weapon by fighters of the so-called “Islamic State”, who are active on both sides of the Syrian-Iraqi border, are not being met with due attention or response. We express solidarity with the efforts of the Iraqi authorities to counter this threat and fight terrorism.

Belarus continues to have a major interest in strengthening international cooperation and productive collaboration with the OPCW. We are counting on an early completion of our initiative to establish a regional Centre of Excellence in the field of protection against chemical weapons at one of the educational institutions under the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Belarus. Allow me to thank you, Director-General, and the heads of the relevant divisions of the Technical Secretariat, for presenting the requisite consultative assistance to carry out this project in a practical manner.

Allow me to voice my confidence that the Seventy-Seventh Session of the Executive Council will be productive, and that the Council will submit documents for consideration at the Conference that will facilitate the efficient implementation of and compliance with the Convention.

I thank you for your attention and ask, Mr Chairperson, this statement be distributed as an official document of the Seventy-Seventh Session of the OPCW’s Executive Council.

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