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NETHERLANDS

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JAN-LUCAS VAN HOORN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS TO THE OPCW
AT THE SEVENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

The Netherlands fully aligns itself with the statement by the Permanent Representative of Italy on behalf of the European Union. Further to that statement, I take this opportunity to make the following observations in a national capacity.

My delegation thanks the Director-General for his opening statement and the Vice-Chairmen for their reports.

For more than a year now, the most prominent issue on the agenda of this Council has been the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. Extraordinary measures were taken to deal with that extraordinary situation. One of the most prominent features was the establishment of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission. Last week, on the 30 September, the Joint Mission officially came to an end. My delegation wishes to express its deep appreciation for the work carried out by the staff of the Joint Mission, both from the Technical Secretariat and from the United Nations. They have done excellent work under very difficult and dangerous circumstances. I also pay tribute to the Special Coordinator, Sigrid Kaag, for the leadership she has shown in bringing the work of the Joint Mission to a successful conclusion. The removal of the priority chemicals from the Syrian Arab Republic and their subsequent destruction outside that country is an accomplishment for multilateral diplomacy.

The job is not done, however. The Syrian Arab Republic has several obligations it still needs to fulfil. The 12 chemical weapon production facilities (CWPFs) remain to be destroyed.

Also, the Syrian Arab Republic has to make good on its promise to provide more clarity regarding its declaration. It is incumbent upon the Syrian Arab Republic to remove all doubts about the correctness and completeness of its declaration and it should therefore take full advantage of the advice offered to it by the Declaration Assessment Team. My delegation looks forward to the presentation of the Declaration Assessment Team later during this session. We also expect the Syrian Arab Republic to produce the additional document it has committed itself to without further delay.

The conclusions of the second report of the Fact-Finding Mission into the use of toxic chemicals in the Syrian Arab Republic are clear-cut: a toxic chemical was used systematically and repeatedly as a weapon. In the statement during the Forty-Fifth Executive



Council Meeting, my delegation clearly outlined its position and there is no need to repeat that in great detail. There should be no mistake, however, that these are very serious facts that require a response from this Council. These clear breaches of the Convention and of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) should not remain without consequences and those responsible should be held accountable.

We also join other delegations in supporting the decision to have the FFM continue its work.

Traditionally, the autumn session of the Council discusses the budget of the Organisation. We would like to express our appreciation to the facilitators for the Programme and Budget 2015, Ambassador Eduardo Rodríguez Veltzé of Bolivia and Mr Domingos Alvim of Portugal, for their excellent work which made it possible to conclude the consultations within the set time frame. We would especially like to commend them and the staff of the Technical Secretariat for making the process transparent and efficient. We look forward to a smooth continuation of the process and adoption by consensus at the Conference of the States Parties.

The Council will have before it three decisions relating to the acquisition of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. In light of the expressed wish of many States Parties for an efficient running of the Organisation, my delegation supports the proposed draft decisions.

Similarly, for the Technical Secretariat to be able to perform its tasks in the efficient, effective and professional manner that we have come to expect, it is essential that it has the staff with the expertise and experience to do so. The Netherlands therefore hopes that the Council will be able to approve the draft decision on rehiring inspectors, which, after extensive consultations, is on our agenda again.

Finally, I take this opportunity to share with the other States Parties that the Netherlands has contributed to the efforts towards universal adherence to the Convention by raising the importance of accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention during a ministerial visit to Angola last July, and recently during the visit of the President of Myanmar to The Hague.

In closing, I request that this statement be issued as an official document of this Seventy-Seventh Session of the Executive Council and be published on the OPCW website and extranet.

Thank you.

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