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SEVENTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE OPCW EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

STATEMENT BY MR JOHN FOGGO, NATIONAL AUTHORITY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Mr Chairman,

First, may I join others in congratulating you on your appointment as Chairman of this Executive Council. The United Kingdom delegation looks forward to working with you in the year ahead.

The United Kingdom supports the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union by the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg. I would like to add some additional remarks on several issues that are of particular concern to my delegation.

The United Kingdom strongly supports the Director General and his staff's work to support the complete and irreversible elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. We remain gravely concerned by continuing reports of alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria: we note there have been more than 50 allegations of use since March this year alone. The use of any chemical as a weapon is a breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention. United Nations Security Council Resolution 2209 was clear that those using chemical weapons must be held accountable for their crimes and brought to justice.

We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate fully with the OPCW, including by providing full access to sites and all personnel requested by the Declaration Assessment Team. It is important that the Syrian Arab Republic submits its long awaited narrative document and all other evidence and documentation to support its declaration. In particular, we remain concerned about the samples reported by the DAT which show traces of chemicals directly linked to the production of sarin and VX. There are a number of other worrying discrepancies that must be addressed in full by the Syrian Arab Republic. It is only when the world has full confidence that Syria has declared its entire programme, that all of its elements have been destroyed, and that the Syrian people are no longer subject to chemical weapon attacks, that we can consider the Syria chemical weapons chapter closed.

The United Kingdom also notes with concern that the recent report of the Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters highlights that the late or non-payment of assessed contributions, and the lack of reimbursement for verification activities, is having a serious impact on the finances of the Organisation. We call upon those States Parties concerned to pay their contributions in full to enable the OPCW to deliver its planned activities for this rest of this year and beyond.

Mr Chairman,

On a more positive note, the United Kingdom welcomes the recent work done by the delegations of Australia and Switzerland on the issue of incapacitating chemical agents. We believe that this work is an important contribution to the debate.

This organisation, and its Technical Secretariat, has a proud record of outreach and engagement with all countries around the world. We strongly support the Technical Secretariat's ongoing work to

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encourage universal adherence to the Convention. We hope that we may hear good news shortly of further States joining the Convention, and we congratulate the Technical Secretariat for their outreach work, including most recently with Myanmar and Angola. We were delighted to support the visit of delegations from Myanmar and Angola to the United Kingdom in June. We are close to achieving universality and we urge those few remaining states outside the CWC to join the Convention without delay.

I request that this statement be issued as an official document of this session of the Executive Council and posted on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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