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### BRAZIL

#### **STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PIRAGIBE S. TARRAGÔ PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BRAZIL TO THE OPCW AT THE EIGHTIETH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to extend to you our cooperation so that we can all have a successful Eightieth Session of the Executive Council. I also wish to commend the Director-General for having organised a productive retreat for the Permanent Representatives, where we could reflect and exchange ideas about how the OPCW can continue to be of value to the international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts in the years to come.

As usual, we have a long agenda, but I would like to start with the most pressing topic, that is, the activities related to the Syrian chemical disarmament programme. Last August, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2235 (2015), which established a Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to identify perpetrators using chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

This very important resolution reflects our common will to bring to justice those who have committed such deplorable acts in the Syrian conflict. We should also congratulate ourselves on having assisted the Security Council to reach that decision. The persistent efforts of the OPCW's fact-finding missions have made it possible to shed light on the many obscure facts of the misuse of chemicals in the conflict. This has enabled us to conclude, with a high degree of certainty, the illegal use of chemicals in the Syrian territory in the past year.

Taking into consideration the greater picture in the Syrian Arab Republic, my delegation does not underestimate the difficulties that the newly-created JIM will have to overcome. Its preparatory work has already shown what a complex issue this is, how many conflicting interests will have to be reconciled, and how much work will have to be done on the ground, in rather unfavorable conditions. These challenges may be new. The instruments to cope with them may be unprecedented. But those values upon which success depends – transparency, impartiality, professionalism, hard work, and engagement – have been a quiet force of progress of this Organisation ever since its inception.

With regard to the fact-finding missions themselves, I will refrain from discussing them, pending reception of their reports. Our expectation, at this juncture, was to use this opportunity to hear directly from the Director-General about the work the teams have been conducting and his plans for the weeks ahead, as he did in his opening statement.



As for the implementation of the combined destruction and verification plan for the 12 remaining chemical weapons production facilities in the Syrian Arab Republic, it is our understanding that the Syrian Government should continue to spare no effort, with the support of the OPCW and the UNOPS, to complete the demolition of the remaining hangars, and to safeguard the remote monitoring equipment installed in the tunnels.

It is very worrisome to learn the Iraqi authorities' confirmation that the terrorist group, known as ISIL, has gained access to prohibited chemical agents, previously in possession of the Iraqi Government, and released toxics, through various means of dispersion.

We expect that the misuse of chemistry by anyone, including by non-State actors, is thoroughly investigated so that we can be fully apprised of the circumstances that allowed that group to get hold of the chemical materials. We call upon the Iraqi delegation to keep the Council timely informed of the investigations conducted by its government, and to share the information with the 1540 Committee of the United Nations Security Council. It will be important to receive from the Iraqi authorities assurances that their national control systems are capable to counter the proliferation of chemical weapons in the Iraqi territory, which, as we know, is in a region currently facing a highly volatile situation.

Also, to obtain a sufficient degree of assurance that the terms of our Convention are being observed, we consider of great significance that the authorisation provided in the previous Council sessions for cementing warfare agents is interpreted as an emergency measure, which does not alter Iraq's obligation to completely destroy its stockpiles as soon as practicable.

As the security situation in many parts of the Middle East and in certain parts of Africa continues to deteriorate, Brazil expects that the Libyan authorities will enhance their work with the Technical Secretariat in pinpointing any missing chemicals and equipment of the sites in the Libyan territory. In particular, we would like to be advised of the results in the tracing of the pinacolyl alcohol, precursor of soman, which disappeared after the civil war. We hope Libya will be able to report any results in this regard to the Council.

With respect to the overall progress in the destruction of the remaining chemical weapons stockpiles, we reaffirm the need of possessor States to carry out their public commitment to destroy their stockpiles within the planned timeline. In this particular, my government takes note with satisfaction of the complete destruction of isopropanol in Libya, following the agreed procedures for remote verification. Likewise, we are happy to learn that four Russian destruction facilities terminated their operations during the intersessional period, and that two additional facilities will be closed until the end of this year.

In relation to Articles VII, X and XI of the Convention, the ongoing facilitations have been able to provide satisfactory outcomes in support of a comprehensive implementation of the Convention. Yet, our consultations have not defined clear deliverables for adoption by the Executive Council. In the future, we hope we can consider how to make better use of the facilitations not only to explore potential ideas and to review the current status of the Technical Secretariat's activities, but also to work towards developing practical, doable outcomes, which can enhance our work in implementing the Convention.

Now, as for international cooperation and assistance in particular, I am delighted to inform the Council that Brazil has been the first country in the GRULAC to receive participants from the Associate Programme. Thanks to the support of the Brazilian private sector, and

generous contributions from the different areas of the government, we were able to provide comprehensive training activities, which included simulations using live chemicals, and carefully chosen substances, such as chlorine.

We are committed to providing further support to the Associate Programme until 2017, imbued by the spirit that more sensitisation and training activities can significantly contribute to capacity-building, strengthen the resilience against the risks posed by chemical materials, and diffuse monitoring, decontamination and evacuation techniques, especially in the context of South-South cooperation.

The Government of Brazil also organised and funded its second training activity of the year. Last August, Rio de Janeiro hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> International Exercise in Assistance and Protection for Portuguese Speaking Countries. We encourage other States Parties, in particular the developed ones, to engage into similar activities and further assist smaller partners to enhance their technical capacity to fully implement the Convention.

On the Programme and Budget for 2016, my delegation welcomes the proposal as revised after the informal consultations. We note, with especial interest, the proposal to establish a trust fund to finance the fact-finding activities. In our view, the Council has an excellent basis on which to frame this year's decision for budgetary purposes.

I would also like to add that the Brazilian authorities, mindful of the need to make our annual contributions to the regular budget, are endeavoring to do so before the end of the year.

We take note with satisfaction of the proposal of the Director-General to combine the Fourth Review Conference with the regular Conference of the States Parties at the end of 2018. We believe that convergence can be found in approving such measure, which would represent a significant economy of financial and human resources, and would further improve OPCW's methods of work.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention the auspicious decision by Angola to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention, a major achievement, which ensures that all Portuguese speaking countries are now States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. I have no doubt that the entering into force of the Convention for this sister African nation will be a historical moment both for that country and for the OPCW.

I would ask that this statement be included in the official records of this meeting.

Thank you.