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SWITZERLAND

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR URS BREITER
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SWITZERLAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTIETH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

First of all, please let me congratulate this Organisation on the accession of the Republic of Angola to the Chemical Weapons Convention. I wish in particular to thank the Director-General for his tireless efforts in the field of universality and to invite States not Party to ratify the Convention without delay.

In the context of the ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, Switzerland urges once again those responsible to definitively give up the use of chemical weapons and to finally respect their obligations under international law. It is of uppermost importance to investigate all accusations and to prosecute the perpetrators. Therefore Switzerland supports the Joint Investigative Mechanism established by United Nations Security Council resolution 2235 (2015) and calls on all parties to fully cooperate with it.

Moreover, my delegation commends the work of the Fact-Finding Mission as well as that of the Declaration Assessment Team. Through its efforts, the DAT was able to bring to light the discordances and irregularities of the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration. These inconsistencies call for an extreme vigilance from the OPCW policy-making organs and Member States.

In spite of all the efforts deployed by this Organisation to fulfil its mandate within the framework of the missions in the Syrian Arab Republic, the conclusions are overdue. We therefore call on the Syrian authorities to intensify their cooperation with the OPCW and to honour the assurances given.

Concerning our discussions on the future of the OPCW I wish to express my gratitude to the Director-General for the organisation of the retreat on the future prospects and priorities as well as to the Dutch authorities for their hospitality. As the post-destruction phase is approaching, the fruitful discussions based essentially on the document prepared by the Director-General represent a constructive starting point to determine the future of the Organisation.

In the framework of the reflections on the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons, we reiterate our conviction as for the necessity to launch a discussion on



CNS-acting chemicals. In collaboration with Australia, our delegation invited several regional groups to take part in informal briefings concerning these chemicals. We support the draft joint paper of the Australian delegation and encourage States to join it by the Conference of the States Parties in December.

Education and outreach also play an essential role in terms of prevention, a task this Organisation will have to buckle down to even more intensively in the coming years. The establishment of an Advisory Board on Education and Outreach represents a very positive development in the eyes of this delegation.

Finally, the issue of arrears is a constant concern in particular because of the liquidity problems it generates. Switzerland urges all States Parties to pay their contributions without delay and for those concerned, the costs related to verification activities. If these calls should remain insufficient, a reflection on more binding measures should take place.

In closing, I would like to request this statement be circulated as an official document of the Eightieth Session of the Executive Council.

Thank you.

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