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UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SIR GEOFFREY ADAMS
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTIETH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

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 reiterates its support for the Director-General's work to support the complete and irreversible elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

However, it is disappointing that, despite the best efforts of the OPCW, it is not possible for any of us here today to say that we have confidence that Syria's chemical weapons programme has been completely dismantled, and the threat eliminated. We remain gravely concerned by ongoing reports alleging use of chemical weapons in Syria – more than 90 since March this year alone. The use of any toxic chemical as a weapon is a breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention. United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015) was clear that those using chemical weapons must be held accountable for their crimes, and brought to justice. We welcome the United Nations Security Council's agreement to establish the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism to identify the perpetrators responsible for chemical weapons attacks in Syria.

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 Technical Secretariat's Declaration Assessment Team. It is important that the Syrian Arab Republic addresses the discrepancies in its declaration and submits its long awaited historical narrative document. Syria must also make available all other evidence and documentation to support its declaration, including transcripts of the Declaration Assessment Team's interviews with those associated with the programme. There remain a number of 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.

We are also gravely concerned by reports alleging the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors in Iraq and Syria. All credible allegations must be investigated, and the perpetrators



must be held accountable. In this regard, we welcome the OPCW's ongoing investigations into all allegations of chemical weapons use in Syria, and its offer to support the Government of Iraq to investigate allegations of use in that country.

From all the available evidence, from more than 200 alleged incidents of chemical weapons use in Syria over the past three years, it is impossible not to conclude that the Syrian authorities are responsible for the overwhelming majority of chemical weapons attacks in the Syria conflict. The international community must continue to stand strong in its resolve to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Turning to other matters, we welcome the constructive discussions to agree a Programme and Budget for 2016, and we are grateful to our Finnish Facilitator for his work to bring about consensus. We are pleased to see zero overall and real growth achieved in the proposed Programme and Budget, while core OPCW business objectives will be supported and strengthened. That is a real success in this financial climate. We welcome also the agreement that OPCW must do more to improve the evaluation of its activities in order better to assess the positive impact of its work. We encourage the Technical Secretariat to improve the quality of its annual Programme Performance Report, with a greater focus on measurable performance data, as recommended in the 39th ABAF report.

This Organisation relies on all Chemical Weapons Convention States Parties to provide it, in a timely fashion, with the resources necessary to carry out its vital work. Indeed, it is an obligation of Parties to the Convention to do so. We continue to be concerned by the issue of late or non-payment of assessed contributions, and the lack of reimbursement for verification activities, all of which has a serious impact on the finances of the Organisation. We again call upon those States Parties concerned, especially those with significant outstanding amounts, to pay their contributions in full to enable the OPCW to deliver its planned activities for the rest of this year and beyond.

On a more positive note, we welcome Angola's recent accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention. We are close to achieving universality and we look forward to welcoming South Sudan to the Convention in the near future. We urge those three remaining states that have not yet taken the positive decision to join the Convention, namely DPRK, Egypt and Israel, to do so without further delay. The new challenge for all States Parties, and for this Organisation going forward, will be to focus effort to ensure that national implementation of the Convention is also universal.

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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