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GERMANY

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DR CHRISTOPH ISRANG
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GERMANY TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson, Mr Director-General, distinguished colleagues,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union by the Dutch delegation.

Please allow me to thank the Director-General for his comprehensive report earlier this morning. A few weeks ago, as part of the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates lecture series hosted by the Frauenkirche in Dresden, Germany, Ambassador Üzümcü delivered a remarkable speech. He called for “re-arming humanity by disarmament”. Let me point out that the Director-General is absolutely right: Disarmament is an essential contribution to peace. This is what the OPCW is about. All those present in this room have to make a contribution to this effort. The OPCW is about peace and security. Let us not lose sight of this, let us not get distracted by other issues. We – this Council – have to focus on the core objective of the OPCW: “to free the world of chemical weapons”.

In this context it is completely unacceptable that chemicals continue to be used as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and that the Declaration Assessment Team is still not in a position to verify that the Syrian authorities have fully abandoned their chemical weapons programme. In fact, the latest DAT reports have prolonged the list of open issues, serious doubts, and uncertainties which translate to risks we have to counter.

This Council must take action. This is why the German delegation supports the draft decision prepared by the United States of America. Expressing serious concern and pushing for full and effective co-operation to resolve the multitude of serious open issues is the least we have to do. This issue must remain under consideration by the OPCW.

Germany condemns the use of chemical weapons anywhere and by anyone. This includes the use of chemical weapons by terrorists. Reports about the recent use of chemical weapons by IS in several cases are particularly worrying. This Organisation must do its part in preventing non-State actors from producing, acquiring or using chemical weapons. The OPCW, in our view, has undertaken useful steps in this direction and its expertise and knowledge can provide us with a sound basis to address the issue. We should carefully examine options for



the OPCW to become even more active in this area, in close cooperation with other relevant actors.

Germany supports efforts to find a swift and practical way to destroy toxic chemicals in Libya that could otherwise very soon be used as a weapon, taking into account the security situation. We are looking forward to contributing to further joint efforts in this vein. Germany will continue to actively participate in the ongoing discussions.

As States Parties to the OPCW, we have to live up to our obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. This also includes full national implementation of the Convention and timely payment of annual contributions and verification invoices. Arrears from past years – especially if they amount to a seven digit sum – are an expression of disrespect for this Organisation and an expression of disrespect for those States Parties that do pay their contributions. So far, we have abstained from taking proper action. But patience is running out. There are, indeed, measures that can be considered:

1. by the Technical Secretariat, e.g. by not giving senior positions to nationals of these States Parties (as already suggested by the Canadian delegation),
2. by the relevant regional group, e.g. by not nominating these States Parties for positions at the OPCW, and
3. by this Council, e.g. by considering appropriate budgetary adjustments. In a similar case, UNESCO cancelled several projects that were proposed by a delegation that is in serious arrears.

The German delegation hopes that these considerations do not have to be further discussed, as outstanding contributions will soon be paid.

In closing, I would like to come back to the quote of the Director-General: “We all have to focus on our core task at the OPCW: chemical disarmament and the prevention of the use of chemicals as weapons. This way, we will jointly contribute to re-arm humanity.”

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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