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GERMANY

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

Madam 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 Slovakia delegation. My delegation welcomes you, Madam Chairperson, to the Chair of the Executive Council. You can count on our full support. I would also like to use this opportunity to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Francesco Azzarello, for his excellent leadership and his dedication to the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Please also allow me to thank the Director-General for his comprehensive report earlier this morning. His outstanding work is crucial to the success of this Organisation. I would also like to commend the staff of the Technical Secretariat for their excellent work—often in difficult circumstances.

It is very sad to note that almost three years after accession to the Convention, Syria still poses the biggest challenge to the Convention and thus to the OPCW family. It is completely unacceptable that chemicals continue to be used as weapons in Syria 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 added to the list of open issues, serious doubts and uncertainties. The Eighty-First Session of the Executive Council gave the Syrian authorities yet another chance to finally come clean—they have missed this opportunity. Moreover, the Director-General highlighted in his conclusions regarding the high level consultations with the Syrian Arab Republic that, and I quote: “the new information presented by the Syrian Arab Republic during recent consultations does not resolve the outstanding issues. In many instances, such new information presents a considerable change in narrative from information provided previously—or raises new questions.” It would thus not be adequate for this Council to just repeat the “concern” it expressed in its decision in March. It must go beyond this. This is why the German delegation supports the draft decision prepared by the United States. Expressing “grave concern” is the least we have to do, while “utmost outrage” would actually be the more appropriate term.



Germany condemns the use of chemical weapons anywhere and by anyone. This includes the use of chemical weapons by terrorists. Reports about several recent cases of non-State actors using chemical weapons are particularly worrying. This Organisation must play 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. The draft decision on non-State actors prepared by a group of Council members in consultation with delegations from all regional groups summarises the relevant instruments. By adopting this decision, this Council can show its resolve to counter chemical weapons threats by non-State actors.

Germany supports efforts to find a swift and practical way to destroy toxic chemicals in Libya that could otherwise easily be used as weapons. We look 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 Convention. This 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.

Germany wants to do more than just pay its dues. An example of this extra effort is the training course on chemical safety that Germany is organising and financing at the University of Wuppertal. A few weeks ago, another 23 specialists from 22 countries benefited from two parallel training courses on loss prevention and safety promotion in the chemical process industries. The first course was offered for the Africa region, while the second targeted Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC). In total, ten courses have been organised by Germany in cooperation with the Secretariat, providing capacity building for 118 experts from more than 50 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

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”.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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