



OPCW

Executive Council

Eighty-Second Session
12 – 15 and 20 July 2016

EC-82/NAT.14
13 July 2016
ENGLISH only

SWEDEN

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SWEDEN
AT THE EIGHTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,

Let me all add my voice to those welcoming you, Ambassador Melono, to the Chair of the Executive Council. Given the high priority that my government assigns to disarmament issues, we are pleased to have returned to a seat in the Council since May this year. You can count on Sweden's full support during the year ahead.

Sweden is aligned with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Slovakia on behalf of the European Union. I would like to add a few comments in my national capacity.

First of all, I would like to thank the Director-General for his informative opening statement. Sweden recently entered into negotiations regarding an agreement on privileges and immunities with the OPCW. Moreover, the chemical laboratory of the Swedish Defence Research Agency FOI belongs to those that have concluded an agreement with the OPCW for off-site sample analysis and we would encourage others to do the same.

The Swedish Defence Research Agency continues to perform analyses for both the OPCW and the UN/OPCW Joint Investigatory Mechanism, and recently passed the test to participate in the OPCW network of analytical laboratories for biomedical samples. We look forward to continued consideration in the Council of how to enable laboratories to deal with the workload that comes with multiple designations.

Let me welcome all participants at the upcoming course on analytical skills development, which will be held in Umeå, Sweden, from 22 August to 3 September this year. Sweden also welcomes the convening of the first "OPCW days" here in The Hague a few months ago, and in particular the "Women in Chemistry" symposium. The symposium is well in line with Sweden's feminist foreign policy, and Finland and Sweden were pleased to co-host a reception in connection with that event.

We have a substantial agenda in front of us, which reflects the important role that the OPCW continues to play in these turbulent times. During our two-year tenure in the Council, we expect to have to deal with a number of important issues to Sweden and to our Nordic colleagues.



This includes:

- continued destruction of chemical weapons in the possessor States;
- efforts to ensure the OPCW's continued ability to deal effectively with contingencies involving chemical weapons ahead of the Fourth Review Conference (and here we welcome the establishment of an open-ended working group on future priorities);
- activities to strengthen the OPCW's verification system including OCAD and the network of designated laboratories, and;
- further deliberation of the OPCW's role in strengthening chemical security and dealing with chemical terrorism.

In this last regard, we are pleased that the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism is making good progress under the able stewardship of Ambassador Aidoo of Ghana and Ambassador Infante of Chile. We share the view that the OPCW should respond to the current challenge and imminent threat of terrorism involving toxic chemicals, and are ready to support the proposed action by the Executive Council.

A special challenge for the coming years will certainly be dealing with the Syrian chemical weapons issue. This matter will be on the agenda of the Executive Council, as well as that of the UN Security Council, which Sweden will be chairing in our first month in January 2017. Sweden is deeply concerned with the continued allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian conflict. Moreover, as noted by the European Union, the Syrian Government has failed to provide the necessary cooperation and disclosure to the OPCW, in order to verify the accuracy and completeness of Syria's declarations, and to deal with the remaining gaps, discrepancies, inconsistencies and ambiguities therein. We urge the Syrian government to rectify the situation expeditiously. As we share the serious preoccupation of the majority of the Executive Council with this situation, Sweden can certainly support the draft decision submitted by the United States.

In this context, I am pleased to announce that Sweden has decided, last week, to make an extra budgetary contribution of SEK one million to the OPCW Trust Fund for Syria Missions, for the purpose of funding the important work of the Declarations Assessment Team and the Fact-Finding Mission. This is in addition to earlier financial and other contributions to the OPCW's work in Syria and a voluntary contribution last December to the Joint Investigatory Mechanism.

In conclusion, I would request that this statement be issued as an official document of this session of the Executive Council, and be placed on the public website.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.