



OPCW

Executive Council

Eighty-Second Session
12 – 15 and 20 July 2016

EC-82/NAT.20
12 July 2016
ENGLISH and RUSSIAN only

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR A.V. SHULGIN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chair,

First and foremost, the delegation of the Russian Federation would like to congratulate you on your election to this distinguished post. We are confident that under your skilful and impartial direction, the work of the Executive Council will proceed effectively, and we will be able to achieve substantial results on all key issues on the agenda. You can count on our support in tackling the complex tasks that stand before you.

The Russian Federation is fully committed to its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. As at 11 July this year, approximately 37,600 tonnes of chemical weapons—94% of the initial stockpile—were destroyed. In line with the schedule, work is under way at the last chemical weapons destruction facility in Kizner (Udmurt Republic), where over 3,300 tonnes of chemical weapons have been destroyed—58% of the stockpile located there. As we have already stated, the destruction of the entire Russian chemical weapons stockpile will be completed no later than 2020.

We are grateful to the Director-General of the OPCW Technical Secretariat, the Chairperson of the Executive Council, and all of the members of the national delegations who, in spite of their very busy schedules, found the time to visit Russia for information purposes in April this year and meet with Russian officials directly involved in implementing the chemical disarmament programme, as well as members of parliament. They also had the opportunity to visit the Kizner chemical weapons destruction facility itself. We believe that during this visit, our respected colleagues were able to see for themselves that the legislative and executive authorities of the Russian Federation are taking all of the necessary organisation, budgetary, and financial measures in order to carry out the obligations under the Convention.

The Russian Federation has noted the information in the most recent reports by the Director-General of the OPCW Technical Secretariat, as well as the documents from the Syrian Arab Republic regarding progress in the elimination of the Syrian military chemical capabilities over the reporting period. We are pleased to note the level of cooperation demonstrated by the Syrian authorities in its interaction with the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

We have also noted the Director-General's report on the implementation of the decision taken at the Eighty-First Session of the OPCW Executive Council on the results of its work to



clarify the situation concerning the initial Syrian declaration under Article III of the Convention.

We believe the consultations between the Director-General and the official representatives of Syria achieved real progress with regard to clarifying the questions that remain; this was made possible thanks to the constructive stance of the head of the Technical Secretariat and the good will of the Syrian side, which submitted a large volume of new, clarifying information, some of which was submitted as a supplement to the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic. This addition to the declaration, as practice has shown, is nothing extraordinary for a possessor State and has happened more than once in the experience of the OPCW.

The result of the collaboration between the Syrian side and the Technical Secretariat is an agreement on the additional declaration of certain scientific research laboratories in the city of Barza and its branch in the city of Jamraya under Article VI (activities not prohibited by the Convention) and Article X (assistance and protection against chemical weapons), which is unequivocal evidence of Syria's openness and Damascus' willingness to cooperate with the OPCW.

As regards future work, we voice our hope that it will be conducted exclusively within the framework of the requirements of the Convention and in full compliance with the standards and practices of the Organisation with regard to other States Parties. We believe that at this stage, we must give the Technical Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic time to calmly review any unresolved matters for which it is possible to find a solution. At the same time, the issues for which efforts to clarify the situation have been exhausted must be temporarily put aside while preserving the ability to continue discussions on these matters as new information becomes available.

Without a doubt, we must take the most careful approach in dealing with Libya and providing assistance in eliminating the remaining chemical weapons stockpiles. It is crucial that the Libyan chemical stockpile is prevented from falling into the hands of terrorists in the complex conditions of the military and political situation in that country. We believe that the option where hazardous chemicals are removed from Libyan territory and destroyed abroad, in line with the decisions of the OPCW, will require a corresponding resolution from the United Nations Security Council, as was done in the situation surrounding the elimination of Syria's military chemical capabilities. In light of the situation in Libya, the Executive Council must weigh all of the risks of conducting this operation, including the transport of chemical components from the Ruwagha facility to a more reliable location, the security of which is to be guaranteed by Libya. Additionally, the development by the Executive Council of a detailed plan for the removal and destruction of Libyan chemical weapons and approval thereof must be expedited.

Most unfortunately, news continues to come from Iraq regarding instances involving the use of chemical weapons by terrorist organisations. We consider it crucial that Baghdad cooperates closely with the OPCW in line with Article X of the Convention (assistance and protection against chemical weapons). We would also like to urge our Iraqi colleagues to immediately inform the Organisations of any new such incidents, as well as the measures being taken in this field at a national level in collaboration with the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

In light of the events in Syria, Iraq, and Libya, the threat of “chemical terrorism” is becoming even more worrying. The problem is taking on a large-scale, trans-border nature requiring urgent action on the part of the international community. We welcome all of the OPCW’s active work in this area. As discussions in the Working-Group on Terrorism and its legal Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors have shown, the Organisation—within its mandate—is capable of undertaking additional measures to expand the relevant capabilities of the States Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Overall, we welcome the initiative to have the Council take a decision on countering the threat of chemical terrorism perpetrated by non-State actors. We are prepared to work on its contents. However, as the draft was just recently submitted and it is difficult to assess the consequences of the proposed measures, we believe that it is necessary to have the capitals work more on this document.

In conclusion, within the context of the discussion on countering chemical terrorism, I would like to state that over the past two years, the Russian Federation has addressed the United Nations Security Council regarding the need to coordinate the actions of the international community in countering terrorism, including “chemical” terrorism. Unfortunately, our initiatives have not received due support.

In March this year at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, Mr Lavrov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, proposed developing a new international convention on suppressing acts of chemical terrorism. At present, it has been distributed among a full range of countries and addresses biological issues, as well. We believe that the start of work on this new convention will help the States Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention make their own substantial contributions to the development of this very relevant document.

We are devoting considerable attention to the discussion on the future priorities of the OPCW. We support the establishment of the Open-Ended Working Group for the discussion and drafting of the appropriate recommendations. We believe that the fundamental principles of the Convention should not be diluted during this evolutionary, consensus-based development, nor should the regulated balance between the rights and responsibilities of the States Parties be disrupted; at the same time, new areas of activity for the Organisation should not reach beyond its mandate as set out in the Convention.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

I would like to request that this statement be distributed as an official document of the Eighty-Second Session of the Executive Council of the OPCW.

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