



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

Eighty-Second Session  
12 – 15 and 20 July 2016

EC-82/NAT.26  
12 July 2016  
ENGLISH and FRENCH only

**FRANCE**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MR PHILIPPE LALLIOT  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE OPCW  
AT THE EIGHTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,  
Mr Director-General,  
Distinguished Ambassadors,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

As you have kindly pointed out, I took up my duties here just three months ago. I should like to thank all of the Permanent Representatives that I have already met as well as the Director-General for the warm welcome that they have extended to me.

As this is the first regular session of the Council over which you are presiding, I should also like to congratulate you and wish you every success for this important session. You can count on the full support of the French delegation. It will be a pleasure for us to have you take the floor in French during our discussions.

France aligns itself with the statement made by my colleague from Slovakia on behalf of the European Union.

This is the first regular session of the Council since the adoption at the March session of the decision requesting the Director-General to conduct high-level consultations with the Syrian Government in order to resolve the outstanding issues regarding the Syrian initial declaration. After more than two years of efforts, 18 visits to Syria, and an impressive array of collected documents and interviews, the questions the Director-General was asked to answer in his report were these: Has Syria indeed declared all of the activities, sites, and weapons related to its chemical programme? At the end of this process, is the Technical Secretariat in a position to state that the Syrian Arab Republic has fulfilled its obligations under the Convention that it joined in 2013? Has Syria been able to regain the trust of the international community in view of its original shortcomings?

The Director-General, and through him the Declaration Assessment Team and the Technical Secretariat, whose professionalism and courage France would like to praise once again, has provided one single answer to all of these questions. In a word: no.

No, Syria has not declared all of its activities, sites, and weapons. Proof of this is in, among other things, its refusal to declare under Article III the activities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC), offensive military activities. Pressured by the facts and the results



of analyses of samples at these same sites, Syria ultimately declared research and development activities in respect of a previously undeclared chemical weapon, so that it could instead refuse to declare the other chemical weapons, traces of which were found during the same analyses. While it claims that it had not retained any documents, Syria was finally able to present some, recreating as it sees fit a contradictory historical account that it attempts to adapt to the Technical Secretariat's findings. Syria continues to duck its responsibilities, both political and financial, and that is unacceptable.

No, Syria has not complied with the Chemical Weapons Convention. The many unanswered questions show this. Syria has failed to regain the trust of the international community. Barely responding and pretending to cooperate or be transparent is not the way to buy respectability. Especially when we know the circumstances under which Syria joined the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Director-General's final report is incontrovertible: the Syrian declaration cannot be verified as accurate and complete. The Director-General has even concluded that without a major change in approach by the Syrian authorities, these consultations have no reason to continue.

So today it is up to the Council to live up to its responsibilities. In March we expressed our concerns about the Syrian attitude. Now that we have a final and complete report, the Council cannot remain silent and must send a strong message by responding firmly. Our role is to ensure that there is no way for a chemical programme, which is based on the Syrian authorities' cover-ups, to re-emerge in the future. The United States of America has circulated a draft decision and France fully supports it.

Through its brutal repression and use of chemical weapons against its own people, Syria has contributed to the emergence of terrorist groups such as Da'esh. France recalls that it strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstances. Here I should like to acknowledge the efforts of the members of the Fact-Finding Mission regarding the use of chemical weapons, whose work is essential. France would also like to commend the work of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism, whose findings will be crucial, because of the importance of preserving the international regime for the absolute prohibition of the use of chemical weapons. We hope that these findings will be able to be presented shortly and that they will give an accurate reflection of the facts.

The situation in Libya remains a cause for concern. This Council, which held a special meeting in February both to reiterate the responsibility of the Libyan authorities to complete the destruction of the final precursors still remaining on Libyan territory and to express its support to Libya and the OPCW in order to find the solution best adapted to the deteriorating security situation and to the technical constraints. Our position has not changed, and we will provide all of the necessary support in order to resolve this issue quickly and effectively.

The danger of the use of chemical weapons is real. Non-State actors no longer hesitate to use them. The OPCW is the first line of defence against this threat. Accordingly France supports the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, as well as its Sub-Working Group on non-State actors. France endorsed the introduction of a draft decision on the threat posed by the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors. We invite the members of this Council to support this decision, which will provide a more consistent framework for the OPCW in the fight against the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors.

But the fight against terrorism must not be the responsibility of our Organisation alone. It is in this spirit that France is committed, in particular within the framework of facilitations under Article VII of the Convention, to ensuring that each State has the necessary means and assumes its responsibilities by having national legislation that integrates the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

This fight is also part of the work concerning the future of the OPCW. This is why France fully supports the draft decision on the establishment of an open-ended working group on the future priorities of the Organisation. France intends to play its full part in these discussions.

The financial situation of the OCPW remains difficult. Responsibility for this lies first and foremost with the States Parties in arrears, be it in respect of annual contributions or the reimbursement of costs related to verification and destruction activities. France calls on these States to regularise their situation as soon as possible. At the same time, France supports the Director-General's determination to deal with this issue quickly. Several common sense proposals have been put forward by the Director-General, the Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters, and the External Auditor. They should now be implemented without delay, and we look to the Director-General to inform the Council of the tools he intends to implement in this regard, and how.

In this context, France welcomes the presentation last week of the draft Programme and Budget for 2017. This draft budget is balanced, which demonstrates a true sense of accountability. The priorities will remain to be discussed, as will the manner in which this Council will choose, in the spirit of consensus that characterises its discussions, to give the Technical Secretariat the means to carry out its missions. Once again, you can be sure that France will participate fully in this debate.

I thank you for your attention and ask that this statement be considered as an official document of this session of the Executive Council.

- - - 0 - - -