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GERMANY

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

Madam Chairperson, Director-General, distinguished colleagues,

Thank you for giving me the floor. Germany fully identifies itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union by the delegation of Malta. Obviously, this includes the gratitude expressed for the excellent work by both the Director-General and the outgoing Chairperson of this Council.

Later this year, we will commemorate the first use of mustard gas exactly one hundred years ago. We will also celebrate 20 years of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”) and the foundation of the OPCW. Jointly, we will underscore the fact that the Convention and the OPCW were the right responses by the international community to the horrors of chemical warfare.

Unfortunately, we must admit that we have not yet achieved the Convention’s goal, which is to free the world of chemical weapons. As States Parties to the Convention, we have to ask ourselves: Have we done enough? Are we doing enough?

Only a few years ago, we were able to give an affirmative answer. We believed that we were on the right path: considerable progress had been achieved in the destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles and – even more importantly – there were no reports of chemical weapons use.

Today, the picture is much less encouraging. Just a couple of days ago, we heard allegations that the nerve agent VX was used for murder. Last weekend, we received reports on alleged chemical weapon use in Mosul, Iraq. Reports on deadly chemical weapons usage in the Syrian Arab Republic have already become routine. Credible reports have confirmed the use of chemical weapons both by non-State actors and by States, even by a State Party to the Convention.

This is the horrific reality of 2017: chemical weapons are back. What seemed to be impossible only a few years ago has turned into a real threat, and the United Nations Security Council cannot agree on taking actions against proven violations of the Convention. All of this calls the longstanding taboo against using chemical weapons into question.



Therefore, clearly, we have not achieved our goal – the goal that the Convention defines for all of us.

What do we need to do? We, as States Parties, must join forces to make sure that declarations of chemical weapons stockpiles of all States Parties are complete and accurate, that all States Parties fully cooperate with the OPCW and that no one goes unpunished after using chemical weapons that harm and kill people. Interests and political goals might differ, but, despite all differences, it must be set in stone that no State Party tolerates the use of chemical weapons. We also have to make sure that the Technical Secretariat has all necessary capabilities to respond to chemical weapons attacks by non-State actors.

Germany will remain committed to our joint efforts to free the world of chemical weapons. The courses on chemical safety and security that my Government finances and organises at the University of Wuppertal for experts from Africa, Asia and Latin America, which will be taking place in the coming weeks, are just one example of this.

But all these efforts will be but a drop in the ocean if we, the States Parties to the Convention, allow the taboo against using chemical weapons to erode further.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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