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OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AT ITS EIGHTY-FOURTH SESSION

Madam Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

1. I welcome you to the Eighty-Fourth Session of the Executive Council, the first in 2017.
2. I would like to begin by expressing my condolences at the passing away of Ambassador Jan-Lucas van Hoorn. I was deeply saddened at hearing this news. Jan-Lucas was a great friend, an esteemed colleague, and his contributions to the OPCW will be long remembered. He will be missed by all of us here.

Madam Chairperson,

3. 2016 brought both progress and challenges. This trend may continue into 2017, a milestone year, as we mark the twentieth anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the founding of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.
4. On 11 November 2016, the Council adopted decision EC-83/DEC.5. Two reports on the implementation of this decision have already been made available to delegations (EC-84/HP/DG.1, dated 2 March 2017 and EC-84/DG.25, dated 6 March 2017). In this decision, among other things, the Council decided that the Secretariat shall conduct inspections, including sampling and analysis, twice a year at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC). The first inspection took place last week. Samples were taken by inspectors and analysis of these materials will be conducted. The Syrian National Authority has extended the necessary cooperation in the conduct of this mission.
5. With regard to the initial declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic, the Secretariat continues to address all outstanding issues. One of the reports I mentioned earlier summarises these issues and presents an update on them. I intend to invite Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad and his delegation in April to resume high-level consultations on the basis of a matrix that I shared with the Syrian Arab Republic in January.
6. The OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM) continues to work on allegations of chemical weapons use submitted by the Syrian Government, and others reported in the media. I will update delegations on this issue under the relevant agenda item.



7. A meeting was held at the OPCW Headquarters on 16 February with Ms Virginia Gamba, Head of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to discuss the continuing work of the JIM. Fourteen JIM staff will be working at the OPCW by the end of March, and will receive the same logistical support as in the past. The first JIM report following the extension of its mandate has been made available to States Parties upon its receipt.
8. In order to ensure the necessary support for our work in Syria, the contract with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) is being extended until the end of 2017. An aircraft hangar and two stationary above-ground facilities remain inaccessible for verification and destruction at this time.
9. The Malaysian authorities have confirmed that the use of nerve agent VX led to the death of a North Korean national on 13 February 2017 at Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2. This incident is deeply disturbing. Following our offer of assistance, and in response to Malaysia's request, the Secretariat has provided technical materials to assist with their internal investigation. The OPCW remains in contact with the Malaysian authorities through their Embassy in The Hague, and stands ready to provide its expertise and assistance.
10. Reports on the alleged use of chemical weapons in Mosul, Iraq, are a source of serious concern. The Secretariat has asked the Iraqi authorities for more information and has offered its assistance to the Iraqi investigation. Last Friday, upon the request of the World Health Organization, we have also provided some decontamination material for the treatment of victims.
11. Progress on the global destruction of chemical weapons continues, and as at 28 February 2017 it had reached 94.3% of declared Category 1 chemical weapons.
12. Destruction at the Kizner facility in the Russian Federation continues to progress. As at 28 February, the Russian Federation had destroyed 38,092 metric tonnes (MT), or 96.8% of its declared Category 1 stockpile. The facility is expected to complete its work, as planned, before December 2020.
13. The Pueblo Chemical Agent Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) in the United States of America, which started destruction operations in September 2016, is making progress. Construction and systemisation of the destruction facility at the Blue Grass Chemical Agent Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) are continuing. As at 28 February 2017, the United States of America had destroyed 25,011 MT, or 90.1% of its declared Category 1 chemical weapons. Destruction is expected to be completed, as planned, by 2023.
14. The destruction of Libya's remaining Category 2 chemical weapons continues to advance. Destruction activities started in September 2016 and have resulted in the elimination of over 250 MT of chemicals by January 2017. Secretariat inspection teams continue to verify the destruction process and have so far conducted three inspections at GEKA mbH in Munster, Germany. Destruction activities are expected to be completed before the end of the year.
15. The Chinese and Japanese authorities are working closely on the excavation, recovery, and destruction of abandoned chemical weapons at Haerbaling and at six

other locations. Over the intersessional period, a tripartite meeting was held in Beijing on 18 and 19 January and the Secretariat conducted four inspections.

16. In response to a request from Iraq, the Secretariat has provided training for experts in the handling of contaminated chemical weapons items, sampling, and medical response. The Secretariat has prepared a facility agreement and a detailed plan for the verification of these destruction activities, which will be discussed during this session of the Council together with other relevant documents prepared by Iraq.
17. The Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Terrorism met for the first time in 2017 under its new Chairperson, H.E. Ambassador Momar Diop, Permanent Representative of Senegal. The Group was briefed on the outcomes of the recent United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (UNCTITF) table-top exercise, and heard from Europol on its activities in the field of counter-terrorism. The OEWG received a report from the Facilitator of the Sub-Working Group (SWG) on Non-State Actors, Ambassador María Teresa Infante of Chile.
18. As reported by the Chairperson, the SWG met on 14 February to discuss the importance of inter-agency cooperation in responding to chemical terrorism. The meeting concluded that formal arrangements with other organisations would be useful to facilitate effective cooperation. The OEWG and SWG are important platforms to address the threat of chemical terrorism. I encourage States Parties to actively engage in these fora, in order to share best practices and bring forward recommendations on measures to counter chemical terrorism.
19. The table-top exercise hosted in January by the Secretariat under the auspices of the UNCTITF was aimed at strengthening inter-agency cooperation in response to a chemical or biological weapons attack. The exercise also provided an opportunity to test the Rapid Response and Assistance Mission (RRAM) in a crisis situation involving multiple international actors.
20. Activities conducted under Articles VII, X, and XI of the Convention are being carried out as planned. I would like to thank the States Parties—and the European Union—that are supporting these activities through financial and in-kind contributions.
21. I have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the World Customs Organization (WCO) on 13 January 2017, as approved by the Council at its Eighty-Third Session (EC-83/DEC.3, dated 13 October 2016). The MOU sets the terms for close coordination with the WCO, which is essential for enforcement of the regime under the Convention for transfers of scheduled chemicals on a global scale. This MOU provides the foundation for capacity building to prevent illicit trafficking of dual-use chemicals, and for a more secure global supply chain.
22. The Technical Secretariat continues to focus on activities to support States Parties in establishing arrangements for effective cooperation with the WCO and other relevant international organisations. We will also seek to engage regional and subregional organisations where appropriate.
23. A fourth phase of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention (the Africa Programme) has been launched for the

period from 2017 to 2019. This phase will employ a results-based management approach, with the aim of securing greater ownership and sustainability of the Programme at the national and regional levels. I encourage African States Parties to benefit from opportunities provided by the Programme, which may also enhance their capacity to strengthen implementation of the Convention at the national level. A report on the Africa Programme has been provided to States Parties (EC-84/DG.18, dated 17 February 2017).

24. A new group of 27 inspectors (Group P) completed initial training from October to December 2016. All graduates are now part of the OPCW's inspection teams and are deployable for missions. The Secretariat rehired seven inspectors in early 2017. This is the third group of re-hired inspectors in accordance with the 2014 decision by the Conference of the States Parties (C-19/DEC.11, dated 4 December 2014). I intend to circulate a Secretariat Note on our assessment of the implementation of this decision.
25. Since the launch of the Secure Information Exchange (SIX) system in 2014, the number of users has continued to steadily increase. Currently, 39 States Parties have registered for SIX, an increase of five States Parties in 2016. I encourage all States Parties to register for the SIX platform.
26. The Convention is a disarmament treaty underpinned by science and technology. Its effective implementation requires active engagement with scientific professionals, an understanding of the impact of scientific developments, and the ability to keep pace with advances in science and technology.
27. Seven members of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) will be completing their terms in 2017 and a formal call for nominations has been issued (S/1452/2017, dated 18 January 2017). I encourage States Parties to submit their nominations to this important advisory body by 31 July. I also invite States Parties to consider the Secretariat's call for voluntary contributions to support the work of the SAB (S/1450/2017, dated 16 January 2017).
28. The OPCW Laboratory is an embodiment of our commitment to and reliance on science and technology. The Laboratory is central to the effectiveness and integrity of the verification regime. It also contributes to the development and maintenance of capabilities in States Parties through the network of designated laboratories. I am pleased to note that eight laboratories have expressed an interest in receiving assistance to become an OPCW designated laboratory through the twinning initiative. I encourage these expressions of interest and I would like to invite those States Parties that are in a position to do so to offer assistance. I believe that the OPCW Laboratory should be expanded and better equipped to strengthen the OPCW's capabilities, as well as to support the further development of capacities in our States Parties. As discussed with the regional groups, I intend to circulate a concept paper with further details on the proposed Laboratory project. Voluntary contributions will be sought to support the project.
29. The Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW met on 13 February, under the able guidance of its two co-Chairpersons, Ambassador Nölke of Canada and Ambassador Koloane of South Africa. This group focuses on the most crucial and substantive areas of the Organisation's work. The outcome of their

deliberations could form important inputs for the Fourth Review Conference in 2018. I encourage the active engagement of all States Parties in the deliberations of this group.

30. Recent experience has demonstrated the operational value of the OPCW privileges and immunities agreement. I invite States Parties that have not yet concluded or ratified an agreement to do so at the earliest opportunity.
31. As at 28 February 2017, the collection level for 2017 assessed contributions was 46.3%, compared to 52.1% on the same date last year. I urge States Parties that have not yet paid their outstanding contributions to do so at the earliest and in full.
32. With regard to the enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, the procurement process to select a partner for the implementation of the core solution is being finalised. At this stage, an internal working group has been established to review the Organisation's rules and regulations on human resources and financial matters, in order to ensure the efficient use of the system. The ERP system is expected to be fully functional by July 2018.
33. During my meetings with regional groups, I circulated a paper on the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Programme, which has been implemented by the United Nations and other international organisations. I was encouraged by the reaction I received to the idea of implementing this Programme at the OPCW Secretariat.
34. This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the founding of the OPCW. The twentieth anniversary will be marked by a solemn ceremony in the "Hall of Knights" in the Houses of Parliament of the Netherlands in The Hague on 26 April, to which all States Parties will be invited.
35. The celebration of this important anniversary is an opportunity to share the achievements of the OPCW over the last 20 years, and to express our resolve to uphold the international norm against chemical weapons. As I stated in my letter of 24 January, I invite States Parties to organise and participate in events marking the anniversary. To support these efforts, the Technical Secretariat will launch a dedicated website (<http://20years.opcw.org>). The site features a list of confirmed events, as well as resources including videos about the OPCW and its work, images, a social media toolkit, and educational posters. States Parties will be notified by e-mail when the site becomes available.
36. Madam Chairperson, my report to the Eighty-Fourth Session is detailed. The full text of my statement will be circulated to delegations as an official document of this session.

Chemical demilitarisation and verification

37. As at 28 February 2017, the Secretariat had verified the destruction by the possessor States Parties of 66,449 MT, or 94.3% of all declared Category 1 chemical weapons.

Russian Federation

38. The Russian Federation had destroyed 38,092 MT, or 96.8% of its declared Category 1 stockpile as at 28 February 2017. The Kizner facility has so far destroyed 4,460 MT, or 77.6% of chemical warfare agent. The facility has completed the destruction of soman-filled 122 mm warheads and is now destroying soman-filled 122 mm projectiles. The last train for the destruction of chemical weapons filled with lewisite is now under construction. Destruction is scheduled to be completed by December 2020.

United States of America

39. As at 28 February 2017, the United States of America had destroyed 25,011 MT, or 90.1% of its declared Category 1 chemical weapons.
40. The BGCAPP has completed 100% of construction work and systemisation is currently at 68%. Similarly to Pueblo, the United States of America will supplement destruction efforts by the use of the static detonation chamber (SDC) to destroy chemical munitions considered unsafe for destruction at the BGCAPP facility. Construction work and systemisation for the SDC stand now at 87% and 80% completion, respectively.
41. The PCAPP facility has destroyed 86.6 MT of sulfur mustard. During the reporting period, the PCAPP facility has conducted assessments and repairs to some parts of its technological equipment. In addition, 0.161020 MT of unknown agent were destroyed at the Recovered CWDF¹ Tooele Army Depot – South Area in Tooele, Utah and 0.000610 MT of unknown agent were destroyed at the Aberdeen Proving Ground Chemical Transfer Facility/Munitions Assessment Processing System at Aberdeen, Maryland.

Libya

42. As at 28 February 2017, Libya had destroyed 26.345 MT, or 100% of its Category 1 chemical weapons and 948.6 MT, or 80.3% of its Category 2 chemical weapons.

Iraq

43. In response to a request from Iraq, the Secretariat has undertaken training for experts in the handling of contaminated chemical weapons, sampling, and medical response. The Secretariat has prepared a facility agreement and a detailed plan for the verification of these destruction activities, which will be discussed during this session of the Council.

Declarations

44. Only one State Party has yet to submit its initial declaration to the Technical Secretariat. The Secretariat will continue to work with this State Party and stands ready to provide assistance regarding the submission of the outstanding declaration.

¹ CWDF = chemical weapons destruction facility.

45. The Secretariat continues to work with States Parties in relation to declarations of riot control agents, 14 of which continue to require clarification. Under Article III of the Convention, States Parties are required to provide an update of declarations on riot control agents within 30 days after any changes have been made. A report on timely submission of declarations under Article VI for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2016 has been provided for consideration at this session (EC-84/DG.8, dated 17 January 2017).
46. As at 31 December 2016, 86% of the States Parties with declarable facilities or declarable activities had submitted their annual declarations on past activities (ADPA). Ninety-four percent of States Parties with declarable facilities and activities submitted their annual declarations of anticipated activities (ADAA) for 2017 on time. The deadline for submission of the next ADPA is 31 March 2017.

Status of implementation of decision C-14/DEC.4 (dated 2 December 2009)

47. The decision of the Conference of the States Parties at its Fourteenth Session (C-14/DEC.4, dated 2 December 2009) on guidelines regarding concentration limits for mixtures containing Schedule 2A and Schedule 2A* chemicals requires States Parties to implement the guidelines as soon as practicable.
48. As at 14 February 2017, 60 States Parties had informed the Secretariat of their status of implementation by responding to at least one of the six surveys conducted since 2011. Of these, 41 States Parties had implemented the decision and 19 States Parties remain to do so.

Cooperation with the World Customs Organization

49. In the framework of the ongoing cooperation with the WCO, the first phase of the Harmonized System (HS) project was successfully completed by the end of 2016. The 2017 edition of the HS Convention, effective from 1 January 2017, includes the allocation of a unique international code to 33 of the most traded scheduled chemicals. A unique HS code will assist customs authorities in identifying scheduled chemicals, allow more accurate and complete trade declarations, and reduce transfer discrepancies.

Electronic declarations tool for National Authorities

50. The Secretariat continues to provide training support to States Parties on the electronic declarations tool for National Authorities (EDNA). E-learning modules are now available in English, French, and Spanish. A report on the status of the Verification Information System, including the EDNA project, has been submitted to the Council for consideration at this session (EC-84/S/2, dated 13 January 2017).

Laboratories

51. Twenty-five laboratories from 18 States Parties are taking part in an exercise on the analysis of the biotoxin ricin. Samples for the second proficiency test on biomedical sample analysis, undertaken by 24 laboratories from 19 States Parties, were dispatched on 17 February.

52. In January, the OPCW Laboratory acquired a nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometer. This instrument will expand and augment the Laboratory's chemical analysis capabilities.

Article VI inspections

53. In the first two months of 2017, 33 Article VI inspections were carried out. This figure includes three inspections at Schedule 1 facilities, seven at Schedule 2 plant sites, one at a Schedule 3 plant site, and 22 at OCPF² plant sites. This represents 13.7% of the 241 inspections provided for in the Programme and Budget for 2017.
54. In 2017, the use of sampling and analysis (S&A) during Article VI inspections will continue routinely in Schedule 2 inspections and in other inspections on a trial basis. The use of analytical methods and equipment will be supplemented on a trial basis by the use of the "FirstDefenderTM" equipment (known as the Raman method), which has been selected as a potential method for routine use for field testing to identify scheduled chemicals.
55. The Industry Cluster held consultations yesterday on the recommendations of the SAB and topics relevant for Article VI verification activities, such as additions to the OPCW Central Analytical Database (OCAD) and OCPF site selection.

Inspectorate training

56. During the reporting period, the Capacity-Building and Contingency-Planning Cell of the Inspectorate Division delivered 29 individual training courses comprising 1,956 inspector days and 511 instructor days to a total of 408 participants.
57. The United States of America continued to provide the Hazardous Waste Operations Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) initial and refresher courses, a requirement under domestic regulations for individuals working at CWDFs in the United States of America.
58. Specialised courses, such as Non-Destructive Evaluation Theory Level II, were also provided in accordance with the mandatory training under the OPCW Quality Management System. The Secretariat offered a team leader induction training course for newly promoted inspectors and rehired team leaders prior to mission deployments.
59. As part of the Secretariat's initiatives to provide chemical weapons detection and response assistance, an exercise involving the use of chemical warfare agents was conducted from 27 February to 3 March at a training facility in Serbia. Participants went through contingency operations scenarios, including detection of chemical agents, sampling from live chemical munitions, layout and characteristics of a clandestine laboratory producing weaponised toxic chemicals, off-site sampling procedures, and safety regulations. The team also established a command and control centre during the exercise, making use of encryption communication technology.

²

OCPF = other chemical production facilities.

Safety and Analytical Chemistry Cell

60. The Secretariat is committed to further developing its scientific and technical capabilities in the context of inspections. In December 2016, the Safety and Analytical Chemistry Cell delivered a training course that presented a methodology to resolve ambiguous identifications during sampling and analysis inspections from first principles, minimising dependence on commercial databases. This complements other courses developed by the Cell with the aim of consolidating existing specialist scientific expertise within the Secretariat.
61. Sampling and analysis inspections have proven invaluable in further developing the Secretariat's logistical, scientific, and technical skills base, and have enhanced preparedness for challenge inspections or investigations of alleged use.

Scientific Advisory Board

62. The SAB met for its Twenty-Fourth Session from 25 to 28 October 2016. In response to its recommendations, I have requested the SAB to establish a new temporary working group (TWG) on investigative science and technology. Terms of reference for this TWG are being drafted and the group will begin its work no later than the first quarter of 2018. The report of the SAB's Twenty-Fourth Session (SAB-24/1, dated 28 October 2016) has been circulated to States Parties, along with my response (EC-84/DG.9, dated 18 January 2017).
63. In 2017, the SAB will continue to provide advice on advances in science and technology in preparation for the Fourth Review Conference. Workshops have been planned in order to review advances in emerging technologies and trends in industrial chemical production. I wish to thank the European Union for its financial support of these workshops.
64. I encourage you to attend the "Science for Diplomats" briefing tomorrow, which will be held at 13:30 in the Ooms Room. This briefing will review previous SAB recommendations about riot control agents (S/1177/2014, dated 1 May 2014).

Engagement with the chemical industry

65. The International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA) presented its views on the future priorities of the OPCW related to verification during the meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW on 31 January. As approved by the OPCW-ICCA Joint Steering Committee in April 2016, a workshop was organised in Frankfurt on 1 March this year by the European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic) together with the German chemical industry association, with the aim of further analysing sources of transfer discrepancies and identifying means for improvement.

Education and outreach

66. During its first year of operation in 2016, the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO) successfully established its programme and practices of work, and responded to several requests for specific input by the Technical Secretariat. The Board will meet here in The Hague to continue its important work next week, from 14

to 16 March, for its Third Session. I would like to encourage States Parties to attend the briefing by the ABEO on Thursday, 16 March.

67. On 1 December 2016, I signed an MOU with the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), with the aim of enhancing cooperation and keeping abreast of developments in chemistry, ethics in science, and education and outreach.

International cooperation and assistance

Implementation support

68. Since the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties, the Secretariat has delivered 11 courses, seminars, and workshops to support the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.
69. In accordance with the approved work plan, tailored assistance activities and programmes in 2017 will focus on three main areas: national implementation, assistance and protection, and the peaceful uses of chemistry.
70. During the reporting period, a legal drafting workshop was organised for four Portuguese-speaking African States Parties. This resulted in the preparation of draft legislation that includes all initial measures, as well as indicative action plans to take these drafts forward.
71. The Technical Secretariat issued a note verbale in February requesting information from States Parties on the status of the implementation of Article VII of the Convention. The information received will be incorporated in the annual reports on the status of implementation of Article VII for the period from 2016 to 2017, which will be submitted to the Executive Council at its Eighty-Sixth Session.
72. In January 2017, the Secretariat invited Member States to nominate representatives for the Mentorship/Partnership Programme. The partnership agreement between Malawi and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was finalised this month with a visit of the British delegation to Malawi. Experience and expertise were shared regarding effective functioning of the National Authority, development and adoption of legislative and administrative measures to implement the Convention, and chemical safety and security issues.
73. The Technical Secretariat and the Government of Qatar will jointly organise an international conference entitled “Chemical Disarmament and Security, the OPCW’s Contributions to Global Peace and Security”, to be held in Doha on 10 and 11 April. The conference will be held in connection with the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention and will highlight the OPCW’s contribution to chemical disarmament and chemical security.

Assistance and protection

74. The Secretariat continues to focus on implementing strategies aimed at enhancing response capacity at the regional level. This approach has contributed to the

strengthening of the capacity of more than 120 first responders from the Africa, Asia, and GRULAC³ regions and Arabic-speaking countries from North Africa and the Middle East, to respond to emergency situations arising from a chemical weapons attack.

75. Furthermore, through a specialised training programme, the Secretariat has equipped participants from 18 countries with the knowledge and skills to sample, analyse, and identify chemical warfare agents.
76. In addition, the Secretariat has responded to specific requests from States Parties to further develop their national programme for protective purposes. Such support has recently been provided to Lebanon and Nigeria.
77. As part of the efforts to engage with other international organisations, the Secretariat has provided expert advice to the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre (RACVIAC) in its endeavour to expand knowledge in States Parties of South Eastern Europe on the Chemical Weapons Convention.

International cooperation

78. The fourth Associate Programme alumni virtual meeting was held in December 2016. The meeting generated valuable recommendations on improvements to the programme curriculum, as well as on contributing to the twentieth anniversary of the OPCW.
79. An international workshop entitled “Needs Assessment and Best Practices on Chemical Safety and Security Management” was held in Riga, Latvia, from 13 to 15 December 2016. The workshop brought together attendees from 20 countries, representing government, industry, and academia. Participants examined trends and challenges, threat assessments, and gaps in chemical safety and security management. The outcomes from the workshop will be presented in a technical paper.
80. A workshop focusing on needs and best practices in chemical safety and security management in the Africa region was held last week in Yaoundé, Cameroon.
81. A capacity-building workshop was held from 21 to 23 February in Doha, Qatar, and focused on chemical safety and security risk assessment and mitigation strategies to prevent chemical accidents and potential misuse of chemicals.
82. The Secretariat has received more than 150 nominations from Member States in relevant fields of knowledge to support the establishment of a database of experts on the peaceful uses of chemistry. The Secretariat is in the process of evaluating the candidates, with a view to launching the database this year.

External relations

83. Since the last session of the Executive Council, we have welcomed 16 new Permanent Representatives to the OPCW, who have presented their letters of credentials: from

³ GRULAC = Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei, Cuba, Ireland, Kuwait, Myanmar, Nepal, Norway, Portugal, Senegal, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, and Yemen.

84. Since the beginning of the year, I have held meetings with a number of high-level officials at the OPCW, namely with Mr Kunio Mikuriya, Secretary-General of the WCO, with whom I signed the aforementioned MoU between our respective organisations; H.E. Mr Alfonso Dastis Quecedo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain; and H.E. Mr Evo Morales, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.
85. Since the last session of the Conference of the States Parties, I have presented the OPCW's work in support of the objectives of the 1540 Committee at the United Nations Security Council session in December in New York. I attended the fifty-third Munich Security Conference, in Germany, and have given a presentation on the importance of arms control and disarmament for global security at the Oxford Union, in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.
86. The Deputy Director-General addressed an open debate of the United Nations Security Council on protecting critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks.
87. A multi-channel social media campaign launched to support the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties raised the profile of the event in 2016. A Facebook Live event that explained the importance of the Conference and highlighted the proceedings of the session reached over 5,600 people. Social media posts covering both the plenary sessions and side events reached over 25,000 people on Facebook and over 30,000 on Twitter. Engagement on social media raises the OPCW's profile and extends its reach to a range of audiences. I encourage all States Parties to share and engage with the OPCW's social media channels.
88. Applications are now open for the eighth edition of the T.M.C. Asser Institute's annual Summer Programme on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, which will take place from 3 to 8 September.

Administrative and financial matters

89. Following the adoption of the decision on the scale of assessments for 2017 (C-21/DEC.7, dated 1 December 2016), the Secretariat issued 192 individual assessment letters to States Parties requesting payment for assessed contributions for 2017.
90. The Organisation has incurred significant costs in undertaking inspections under Articles IV and V of the Convention. As at 28 February 2017, invoices for EUR 5.2 million remained unpaid by two States Parties. Again, I urge payment of these invoices.
91. Unpaid assessed contributions and unreimbursed Article IV and V verification costs will continue to create financial challenges. As you will note from the Monthly Financial Situation Report as at 28 February 2017 (S/1476/2017, dated 3 March 2017), the Secretariat may need to withdraw EUR 1.2 million from the Working Capital Fund before the end of 2017, unless all outstanding contributions are

made by States Parties. The Secretariat continues to take measures to address the financial situation. These include reminding States Parties of their financial obligations, closely monitoring the implementation of the 2017 Programme and Budget, strengthening the Working Capital Fund, and using trust fund resources where available.

92. Pursuant to the adoption by all United Nations common system organisations of a new compensation package for the professional and higher categories of personnel, the Technical Secretariat will propose amendments to the Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters in June. Following the Executive Council's consideration of the matter in July, a decision will be considered for adoption at the next session of the Conference of the States Parties.
93. In a letter dated 18 January, the current owner of the OPCW Headquarters building, Hague Office Investment I Coöperatief U.A. (HOI) informed the Technical Secretariat of its intention to sell the building in March 2017. A Note on the intended sale has been provided to delegations (EC-84/DG.19, dated 22 February 2017).
94. A draft decision on the extension of the Tenancy Agreement has been submitted to States Parties for consideration (EC-84/DEC/CRP.7, dated 24 February 2017).
95. In the past year, the Technical Secretariat has reported to the United Nations on its greenhouse gas emissions, made efforts to reduce its emissions, and has offset those emissions that are unavoidable, leading to the OPCW being declared a United Nations climate-neutral organisation in the "Greening the Blue" report 2016.
96. Madam Chairperson, this concludes my statement. Thank you for your attention.

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