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ROMANIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR BRÂNDUȘA PREDESCU
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ROMANIA TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mrs Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

From the outset, I would like to stress that Romania fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union by the delegation of Malta. Both the OPCW and the EU are preparing for two significant events this spring, the 20th anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “the Convention”) and the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome.

The EU and the OPCW have brought their specific contribution to peace and stability which has been clearly recognised through the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to them in 2012 and 2013 respectively. Speaking about the OPCW, this is a time to celebrate the considerable achievements under the umbrella of our Organisation but also a time to come up with a pragmatic, self-confident and coherent vision for the future and my country strongly supports this approach.

The OPCW and the international community as a whole are confronted with difficult challenges, among which new allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and the growing risk of non-State actors acquiring and using chemical weapons. New concerns also arise over recent reports alleging the use of chemical weapons in Mosul. This troubling and alarming reality confirms time and again the need for the OPCW to continue to count on highly skilled staff and also to adapt to new challenges in a medium and long-term perspective. Likewise, my country stands firm in reiterating its conviction that each and every one responsible for attacks with chemical weapons should be held accountable.

Romania strongly supports the activities of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in the Syrian Arab Republic, including the possibility for the Technical Secretariat to confirm the condition of the two stationary above-ground facilities, and to perform the annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed. Romania also looks forward to the renewed work of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism.

The Organisation proved its ability to implement the Convention inter alia through measures to prevent the hostile use of toxic chemicals by non-State actors. A clear example is the



successful removal of Category 2 chemical weapons from Libya. Romania also welcomes the ongoing progress made in the destruction of these chemical weapons at the designated facility in Germany.

As it has been clearly stated by the Director-General during the First Session of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach last year, the education and outreach have to be an essential element of the Organisation's work to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons.

This year's 20th anniversary of the Convention is a good opportunity to enhance public awareness at the level of States Parties about the role of the OPCW. In this context, the National Authority of Romania under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest is conducting activities of outreach among different stakeholders and for the general public including young people. The aim is to present the achievements during the past two decades under the Convention and also the current and future challenges to global security posed by the threat of chemical terrorism.

My delegation wishes to acknowledge the outstanding work of the Director-General and to commend the constant efforts and significant results of the Technical Secretariat's staff. Allow me also to praise the highly professional way in which Ambassador Odette Melono has been managing her position at the forefront of the Executive Council since May 2016.

Last but not least, I would like to acknowledge the activity of the subsidiary bodies of the OPCW and also the dedicated work of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities and of the open-ended Working Group on Terrorism and of the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors.

In conclusion, allow me also to reconfirm Romania's unwavering commitment to the Convention and to the OPCW.

Thank you.

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