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TURKEY

**STATEMENT BY MR A. ALPER YUKSEL
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY TO THE OPCW AT THE
EIGHTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Thank you Mr Chairperson,

I would like to thank Director-General Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for his informative statement today.

I also would like to express our appreciation to the OPCW staff for their efforts and dedication, particularly regarding the ongoing operations in relation to Syria.

We fully align ourselves with the European Union statement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Bulgaria.

Countless thresholds have been passed by the Syrian regime since it became a Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention back in 2013.

As the Council is well aware, the regime still enjoys impunity despite being attributed responsibility of using chemical weapons against its own people in more than three cases.

These attacks carried out by the regime caused the death of dozens of innocent people.

Since the initial declaration of the Syrian regime back in 2013, Turkey has continuously warned the international community that the regime deliberately declared its chemical weapons capacity inaccurate and incomplete.

The reports of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) registered that these warnings and alerts were accurate.

Chemical weapons attacks by the regime against innocent civilians, including children, have not stopped even after the regime's brutal sarin attack on 4 April 2017 in Khan Shaykhun/Idlib.

The recent attacks in eastern Ghouta and Idlib province are the concrete illustrations of the regime's violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Throughout last four years the regime has used on more than 25 occasions toxic chemicals as weapons. In that regard, I would like to refer to the relevant FFM and DAT reports of the



OPCW, as well as the reports of the JIM and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria.

Turkey once again wishes to underscore that the use of chemical weapons is a crime against humanity and the perpetrators must not be able to escape from accountability. The regime must be held accountable without delay.

In this vein, I would also like to refer to the initiative of France for an “International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons”, which aims to support and complement the relevant multilateral mechanisms. Turkish Foreign Minister, H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, took part in the meeting held in Paris on 23 January 2018.

We appreciate and support the work of the FFM and DAT in Syria. Turkey will continue to facilitate the work of the FFM which is conducting its work in an impartial, professional and unbiased manner.

As a State Party meticulously upholding its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and a genuine contributor to the chemical disarmament and non-proliferation regime, Turkey continues its cooperation with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW.

Needless to mention, the use of chemical weapons is a serious crime wherever and by whomever, a State or a non-State actor. The use of chemical weapons by Daesh has already been confirmed by the JIM. As Turkey is conducting effective operations against the threat posed by terrorist entities like Daesh/ISIL and PKK’s Syrian branch YPG, it is also eliminating the threat of chemical weapons use by these non-State actors, be it in Afrin or elsewhere.

Turning to other regions, we welcome the announcements by the Technical Secretariat that in Libya and Iraq the remaining chemical weapons destructions have been completed.

As the Fourth Review Conference is approaching, we believe that while the maintenance of security and disarmament priorities of the Organisation is important, deterrence of measures against the re-emergence of chemical weapons and holding the perpetrators accountable are also crucial for the future effectiveness.

We once again call upon those States who are not yet party to the Chemical Weapons Convention to do so without further delay. We continue to believe that joining of those remaining countries to the Chemical Weapons Convention regime would bolster the efforts in other disarmament fields and we attribute utmost significance to the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session of the Council and be posted on the external server and the website.

Thank you.