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SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY MR HUSAMUDDIN ALLA
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND EXPATRIATES
IN THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
AT THE THIRTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson of the Executive Council,
Mr Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I should like to express our appreciation to the Director-General and the coordinator of the Joint Mission for their briefings on the work that has been done in the Syrian Arab Republic.

On 23 October, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons the official declaration required under Article III of the Chemical Weapons Convention. My country has submitted that declaration, which contained the chemical weapons destruction plan, and the rationale behind its preference for their destruction outside the Syrian Arab Republic, four days before the specified deadline. This is witness to its full commitment to comply with the legal obligations under the Convention. In this respect, it is my pleasure to thank the Technical Secretariat for the support it has provided to the Syrian Arab Republic during that phase.

On that basis, today's decision by the Executive Council specifies the necessary requirements to implement the destruction operations.

During last week, the Operational Planning Group ("the OPG") held intensive meetings with the participation of a team of Syrian specialists to discuss the required operational plans needed to implement the destruction plan proposed by the Syrian Arab Republic, within the time frames specified in the final paper containing the meeting's conclusions and recommendations, in addition to the necessary requirements for implementation within these time frames.

In this respect, I wish to confirm the commitment of the Syrian Arab Republic to make all possible efforts to implement what has been agreed on during the meetings of the OPG. I should also mention that it is necessary to provide the assistance and support needed to undertake the task at hand in safe and secure conditions, in line with the conclusions and recommendations paper which stressed the need for flexibility with respect to deadlines, depending on the security situation and the provision of the needed equipment. This has also



been stressed in paragraph 24 of the decision which has just been approved by the Executive Council.

The Syrian Arab Republic confirms once again what it has already stated since this operation has been launched, namely, that it is unable to meet the costs of chemical weapons destruction and those of verification and inspection, due to its current economic difficulties, to the economic sanctions imposed on it and to the fact that priorities are now focussed on fulfilling the basic needs of citizens.

In this respect, my country welcomes the decision's confirmation that the Syrian Arab Republic shall no longer bear responsibility for its chemical weapons upon their transfer outside its territory, and that it shall not be burdened with any financial obligations for destruction activities outside its territory. We also welcome the recommendation that the Director-General establish a trust fund to cover the costs of these activities.

The Syrian Arab Republic has submitted twelve requests for the conversion of facilities in accordance with paragraph 13 of Article V of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which authorises a State Party to request permission to use a chemical weapons production facility for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, in the manner stipulated in paragraph 14 of the same article.

Destruction of these facilities would place an additional burden on our national economy, especially under the current economic situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and in view of the unilateral sanctions imposed on it, and would cause economic losses resulting from building facilities for activities not prohibited under the Convention, which is very difficult in the current situation. Such destruction would have an impact on the surrounding geological structure, on natural resources and on the underground water table. On the other hand, converting these facilities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention would create job opportunities for the surrounding communities.

In view of the above, the Syrian Arab Republic hopes that the Executive Council of the OPCW will favourably consider submitting to the Conference of the States Parties a recommendation to approve these conversion requests, taking into account the justifications specified therein.

The Syrian Arab Republic has acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention and has acted in full cooperation and coordination with the OPCW. The Syrian Arab Republic has submitted all the information in its possession, pursuant to its obligations under the Convention and the decision taken by the Executive Council on 27 September 2013, and has implemented all that was required from it with the utmost accuracy and transparency.

As part of its action to continue fulfilling its obligations, and committed to complying with the specified time frames, the Syrian Arab Republic, with total transparency and in full cooperation with the OPCW and the United Nations, has submitted some of the requirements necessary for fulfilling these obligations within the deadlines specified in the said time frames, through official correspondence with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and with the OPCW.

My country has noticed with deep regret that some sensitive details that have been reviewed during the OPG meetings, when discussing the security plan for the transfer of chemical

weapons to their shipping points, have been deliberately leaked to the press. The lists of the technical and logistics requirements submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic to ensure the success of the operation have also been leaked.

These leaks by known parties trying to hamper the fulfilment of the necessary requirements within the specified deadlines, and to sabotage the existing cooperation, cannot be considered as anything else than a breach of the rules that govern information confidentiality. They are a wilful attempt to deal a blow to the full cooperation of the Syrian Arab Republic with the United Nations and the OPCW, to undermine its full compliance with its obligations and damage what has been achieved with precision so far, especially in the eyes of local and international public opinion. These deliberate leaks are an attempt to hinder the work of the Syrian Arab Republic, the OPCW and the United Nations.

Mr Chairperson,

In conclusion, I affirm once again the commitment of the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with the OPCW and the Joint Mission in order to successfully complete the elimination of chemical weapons. In this respect, we stress the need to provide the necessary technical, logistics and financial requirements for completing this task.

I wish that this statement be considered as one of the official documents of the Executive Council. I thank you.

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