



OPCW

Executive Council

Thirty-Fifth Meeting
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**STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AT ITS THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING
ON 26 NOVEMBER 2013**

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. I welcome you all to the Thirty-Fifth Meeting of the Executive Council.
2. The decision adopted by the Council at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting on 15 November 2013 (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013) has set the stage for what will be an intense and challenging phase of our mission in the Syrian Arab Republic to eliminate its chemical weapons programme.
3. The Secretariat has already initiated action on the most urgent of the tasks identified by that decision. My second monthly report was issued yesterday (EC-M-35/DG.1, dated 25 November 2013). In addition to providing information on the progress made in the work of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission in Syria, I have drawn attention to the most immediate priorities.
4. The Council has asked me to explore, on an urgent basis, options for destruction in commercial chemical disposal facilities of the binary chemical weapons components and any associated reaction masses. On 21 November 2013, the Secretariat issued a call for expressions of interest (EOI) from commercial companies. The purpose is to initiate tenders for the treatment and disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous organic and inorganic chemicals and related packaging materials and containers.
5. The deadline for receipt of the EOIs is 29 November 2013. National Authorities of States Parties have been notified of this call.
6. The Secretariat is in the process of developing a set of technical selection criteria that will serve as the basis for the evaluation of the tenders. These standards will be made available to States Parties for their information.
7. A significant part of Syria's declaration of its chemical weapons includes chemicals that fall in the category of common industrial chemicals, or otherwise chemicals that can safely be rendered harmless or destroyed.



8. I urge States Parties to do their utmost to encourage qualified and capable firms based in their countries to participate in this crucial undertaking. The resolve to eliminate Syrian chemical weapons in the safest and soonest manner possible reflects a collective commitment. In order to realise this goal, States Parties, especially those with the capacity to safely dispose of such chemicals, can and must play their part.
9. A critical related aspect of carrying out the destruction of these chemicals is the associated costs. In line with the request of the Executive Council, I have established a special trust fund. The projected costs for the treatment and disposal of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic and of the effluent generated during the destruction of mustard and binary chemical weapons components are in the range of EUR 35 to 45 million. This figure does not include the costs of transporting the chemicals to be destroyed, which are expected to be covered through in-kind contributions. I wish to thank Denmark, Italy, and Norway, who have come forward with generous offers for maritime transportation.
10. A Maritime Planning Group is expected to meet in Cyprus to discuss and arrive at arrangements between States Parties offering to assist in transportation and to support the OPCW-UN Joint Mission. The Executive Council has requested me to submit, by 17 December, a plan for the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons outside its territory. The Council has furthermore asked that the plan include provisions for ensuring clear responsibility at each stage for all chemicals, including responsibility for the requirements of safety and security. It is my hope that the Maritime Planning Group will contribute to identifying the responsibilities of the States assisting in the maritime transport in accordance with existing legal regimes.
11. Meanwhile, a large part of the materials and items necessary for the safe and secure packaging of chemicals has begun to arrive in Lebanon and arrangements are ongoing for their onward transportation to Damascus, from where they will be distributed to the various sites.
12. The Special Coordinator has continued her meetings with senior officials of States, including through visits to various capitals, as part of her efforts to garner support for the work of the Joint Mission. Her efforts include soliciting financial and in-kind contributions for the trust funds established by the United Nations, as well as the OPCW.
13. Since the Council last met on 15 November, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has begun to destroy specialised and standard equipment belonging to production facilities, in addition to special features of buildings and standard buildings at the same locations.
14. The Joint Mission is scheduled to conduct a sequence of site visits to verify the destruction of special features of buildings and infrastructure belonging to production facilities. Inspections at four sites are planned for the coming days. In addition, the team will verify the complete destruction of mobile units located at a particular site. Inspections at two sites have had to be deferred due to military operations in the vicinity. The team is on standby to travel to these areas when security conditions allow.

15. The Joint Mission is also ready to visit the Homs cluster of sites, to verify the destruction of remaining Category 3 items in addition to the destruction of special features of buildings and structures at those sites.
16. During the last week, the Damascus-Homs route has remained accessible only intermittently, with frequent and long closures. Our future verification activities will be impacted by this situation, as alternate routes are even less secure.
17. Given the considerable increase in the workload in the coming weeks, the Secretariat intends to reinforce the team in Damascus. We will almost double the number of inspectors in Syria to about 30. The increase is in keeping with the need to run activities in parallel at different locations. This includes witnessing the decanting and packing of chemical products, collecting samples for further analysis, as well as monitoring the loading and embarkation of chemicals for transportation outside Syrian territory. A team rotation will occur in the first week of December. However, this will not affect the total deployment.
18. In conclusion, I wish to highlight once again the need for concerted action by States Parties in realising the target dates identified by the two decisions of the Executive Council and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). With the security situation in Syria becoming more complex, the implementation of the programme to remove chemical weapons from the territory of Syria to locations elsewhere poses increasing challenges. We must, therefore, proceed expeditiously in ensuring sufficiency of funds and availability of adequate options for the destruction of chemicals to be transported from Syria. I call upon all States Parties to give this matter attention at the highest political levels in order that we may be able to meet the various target dates on the way to the completion of this mission as planned.
19. Thank you.

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