



OPCW

Executive Council

Forty-First Meeting
22 May 2014

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NETHERLANDS

**STATEMENT BY PIETER M. VAN DONKERSGOED DEPUTY-PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE TO THE OPCW AT THE FORTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

As this is the first time the delegation of the Netherlands takes the floor during the present term of the Council, allow me to congratulate you on your election as Chairman. You have before you a challenging task, but your leadership and diplomatic skills will undoubtedly guarantee a smooth and efficient running of proceedings. In the exercise of your important function, you can count on this delegation's full support.

I also wish to take this opportunity to wholeheartedly thank His Excellency Ambassador Horin of Ukraine for the excellent manner in which he guided the Council through an eventful year.

My delegation is grateful to the Director-General for his report on progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

The Netherlands associates itself with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Greece on behalf of the European Union.

It has been nearly a month since the last shipment of priority chemicals out of the Syrian Arab Republic took place. The agreed deadline of 30 June, for the complete elimination of Syria's chemical weapons programme, has become unattainable. This should not be taken lightly; my delegation considers it a serious failing for which the responsibility lies with the Syrian Arab Republic.

We understand that the remaining eight percent of priority chemicals are ready for transport and we express the hope that they will be transported to Latakia and shipped out very soon.

The Netherlands welcomes the news that the remaining isopropanol in Site 2 now has been destroyed. The same, unfortunately, cannot yet be said of the twelve remaining chemical weapon production facilities. As we have stated on previous occasions, the Convention clearly calls for their physical destruction. We call on the Syrian Arab Republic to start with the destruction of the seven aircraft hangars without further delay and to quickly resolve outstanding issues with regard to the underground production facilities.



We appreciate the efforts undertaken by the Technical Secretariat to ensure that the initial declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic is complete and correct. We look forward to receiving the results of the “declaration assessment team” after they return from Damascus.

The delegation of the Netherlands shares the serious concern already expressed by many, inside as well as outside this room, about recent reports of renewed use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. We support the Director-General’s initiative to deploy a Fact-Finding Mission to investigate the allegations and welcome the fact that the Syrian authorities have pledged their cooperation with the Fact-Finding Mission. We express the hope that the mission will be able to start its investigation soon and look forward to the Fact-Finding Mission's report.

In closing I request that this statement be issued as an official document of this Forty-First Meeting of the Executive Council.

Thank you.

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