



OPCW

Executive Council

Forty-First Meeting
22 May 2014

EC-M-41/NAT.6
22 May 2014
ENGLISH only

DENMARK AND NORWAY

**STATEMENT BY DENMARK AND NORWAY AT THE FORTY-FIRST MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman, let me at the outset, welcome you as Chair of the Executive Council. I am confident that under your able stewardship the Council will work efficiently and effectively on implementing its mandate. My delegation lends its full support to your endeavours. Likewise our congratulations and expression of support goes to the new Vice-Chairs.

Denmark aligns itself fully with the statement of Greece on behalf of the European Union. I have the honour and pleasure of speaking on behalf of Norway and Denmark today.

The expeditious removal and destruction of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons is of the utmost importance. The fact that all timelines – agreed as well as self-imposed – have been missed so far is highly unsatisfactory. I have listened carefully to the briefing by the Director-General on the progress in eliminating the chemical weapons. Regrettably this has not alleviated any concerns. It has been almost a month since the last removal operation took place and we are now in a situation where the 30 June deadline set by this Council and the United Nations Security Council for complete destruction is in serious jeopardy.

While it is commendable that the remaining isopropanol has been destroyed and that steps have been taken to prepare for the final removal, those steps were already overdue. As you are aware, Mr Chairman, Denmark has a leading role in providing maritime transport of the chemical weapons as well as navy escort for the merchant ships together with Norway and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This is done in cooperation with China and the Russian Federation, with others providing key elements as well. Delays in completing the removal have direct consequences for us all throughout the process. The Syrian Arab Republic must find a way to remove the remaining chemicals without further loss of time.

Likewise the destruction of the remaining chemical weapons production facilities is long overdue. We call on the Syrian Arab Republic to engage constructively in the process of completing the planning phase and to take all necessary measures to begin and complete physical destruction of the facilities. The Syrian Arab Republic must also cooperate fully with the OPCW Technical Secretariat in streamlining the declarations made so far, and provide all information and documentation necessary to complement these declarations.

Norway and Denmark are gravely concerned over the recent allegations of use of chemical weapons. It is very important that the factual situation concerning these allegations is



determined and we fully support the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission launched by the Director-General. We look forward to receiving the results at the earliest possible time.

Lastly, Mr Chairman, I would be remiss not to express Norway and Denmark's deep appreciation for the work undertaken by the Director-General and his staff as well as the OPCW-UN Joint Mission and the Special Coordinator. We deem it both useful and necessary to give the Director-General the possibility of engaging with the Executive Council on this work as it concerns the core mandate of the Council. While we expect all removal and destruction activities to be completed very soon, we wish that the Council convenes regularly to take stock of the situation together with the Director-General.

In the same vein we would hope that the Council would be able to agree on specific outcomes of our deliberations.

That concludes my statement Mr Chairman, and I thank you and request that this statement is circulated as an official document of the Council.

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