

**STATEMENT BY  
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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA TO THE OPCW  
AT THE FORTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

**22 MAY 2014**

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Mr Chairman,

My delegation congratulates you for taking the baton at a very significant time in our OPCW history.

2. Malaysia is happy to be back in the EC. But it was also good for us to be an observer. Some “permanent” members should do this from time to time because when we step back, we understand more. We see the picture more clearly. Oftentimes, it is not that we are hard of hearing. We are merely hard of listening.

3. Last year, Syria became the 190th member of the States Parties to the CWC. Thanks in large part to EC-M-33/Dec. 1 of 27 September 2013, and UN Security Council Resolution 2118 which upheld our decision, Syria is already well on the way of getting rid of all its chemical weapons. With the help of the international community, the rich states provided funds to assist Syria in its herculean task of getting the weapons out of its territory in the shortest time possible. This is a feat that even the more veteran possessor states cannot meet.

4. Now the glass is almost empty. In a matter of weeks, there will no longer be chemical weapons on Syrian soil. We know that sometimes, this last stretch of the marathon may be the hardest to complete. But we know that Syria will be able to do it – it has come too far, gone through too much to fail now.

5. As a small country, Malaysia does not have the technology to gain access to the kind of information that pertains to Syria. We do not have satellites to know what they have, or no longer have. Therefore the Technical Secretariat is our source of reference. It is because of their findings and reports – reports that we ourselves commissioned – that my delegation can make a judgement.

6. This is what we understand: the Chemical Weapons Production Facilities are now empty. Syria is on its last leg of removing the remaining chemical weapons from one single site. Everything else is gone. It would be foolhardy for them to not remove the little that is left, and foolhardy we know they are not.

Mr Chairman,

7. My delegation is however concerned about the issue of the 12 remaining CWFs in Syria and the ramblings that perhaps given the exceptional circumstances (yet again), some leeway could be considered. The CWC is more than just our guiding principle. It is a Convention into which much thought, discussion and careful crafting was done. It is a Convention that was 12 years in the making, and as such, each and every article of the Convention deserves our respect and adherence. We cannot keep on changing the threshold, lowering the bar, making up the rules as we go along, or change the CWC's goalposts. Think of it like maths: if you change any part of the equation, then you change the outcome. And if we still want to change the equation, then we had best be prepared for an outcome we did not envision. Some rules are just not meant to be broken.

8. My delegation looks forward to not only a Syria free of chemical weapons, but a world free of one too. We have heard many delegations urging Syria to speed up its efforts in order to meet the Security Council deadline of 30 June. This is not up to Syria alone – there must be political will with which to assist Syria to meet this goal. The best that we can be is to be solidarist in our thinking and think of the greater good. Wielding the stick too often can sometimes break the camel's back. Instead of thinking about what is not, we should find solutions about what actions will yield the best results and get us to where we want to be. Was it not Lou Holtz, the famous American coach who said - if you burn your neighbour's house down, it doesn't make your house look any better?

Mr Chairman, distinguished delegates,

The momentum has started. Let the destruction begin, and may the odds be ever in our favour.

I request that this statement be considered as an official document of the meeting of this Council.