

(Check against delivery)

Statement by
Ambassador Piragibe S. Tarragô,
Permanent Representative of Brazil to the OPCW,
At the 42nd Session of the Executive Council

The Hague, 17 June 2014

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to thank the Director-General and the Special Coordinator for their respective reports, which update us on the situation of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

As we look back to September 2013, when the Syrian programme was agreed, we have to recognize the progress made in the dismantling of the chemical weapons stockpiles. The task has been carried out under extremely difficult circumstances. But we have not yet reached the completion point. A significant amount of toxic chemicals still remain in the country and must be removed before 30 June next. We count on the cooperation of the Syrian authorities and other parties with influence on the actors in the Syrian conflict to enable us to consider, by that date, the operations of elimination of the chemical weapons from the country completed. The conclusion of that part of the programme would send a very positive signal of the engagement of the Syrian Arab Republic with the principles and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention. And it would also enhance the prospects for a successful outcome of the conflict.

However, the Syrian Government should also cooperate with the Executive Council in order to clarify any discrepancies in its original declaration. The lingering suspicion of existing undeclared toxic chemicals is not conducive to the successful completion of the programme.

We are still waiting for concrete steps in the destruction of the chemical weapons production facilities. We are hopeful that the consultations recently held among Syrian government, the Technical Secretariat and interested State Parties will lead to the beginning of the works on the facilities, at the earliest.

Mr. Chairman,

It is deplorable that available information has lent credence to the view that toxic chemicals, namely chlorine gas, have been used. We are concerned that the fact-finding mission to investigate that use of chlorine gas last April was not able to conclude its job for the reasons we all know. It seems to us that the episode, much regrettable as it is, also put the lives of the mission's personnel in a very dangerous situation. It should alert us to the need to carry out this and future field visits when

having been assured that they are safe and secure. Again cooperation by the Syrian Government and opposition forces will be critical for the safe development of the investigations.

Finally, we believe that, with the continuing cooperation and support of this Council, a positive outcome of the Syrian programme is attainable.

Thank you.