



OPCW

Executive Council

Forty-Second Meeting
17 June 2014

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THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

**STATEMENT BY SIR GEOFFREY ADAMS, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND TO THE
OPCW AT THE FORTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

As it is the first time I have taken the floor with you as our Chairman, I would like to start with a warm welcome for your year as Executive Council Chair. We look forward to working with you and pledge you our full support.

The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement given by the distinguished Ambassador of Greece on behalf of the European Union, but I will take this opportunity to highlight a few points.

As always, we are grateful for the update provided this morning by the Director-General and also the briefing provided by the Special Coordinator. We would like to reiterate our support for the OPCW-UN Joint Mission, and in particular all the staff working so hard to oversee the efforts to eliminate the Syrian Chemical Weapon Programme, and therefore the threat these weapons pose to the Syrian people. This is all the more commendable given the hazardous environment in which the individuals have to work.

The fact is that we have been without progress on the removal of chemicals from Syria since 24 April: over 50 days. And it remains the case that 8% - or 100 metric tonnes - of Syria's chemicals still remain in one site in Syria, with no indications of a timescale for a move. In failing to deliver these to the port of Latakia, Syria is holding up the next steps of transportation, transshipment, unloading and ultimately destruction – a complicated operation which has been planned and prepared, but awaits Syrian action. Other States Parties have done their part, but Syria has regrettably failed to complete its undertakings.

Syria has also comprehensively failed to meet deadlines related to the destruction of 12 of its former chemical weapon factories, destruction of which is part of its obligations under the Convention. We see no reason why the seven hangars at least should not be destroyed as soon as practicable, as we have heard that agreement is close. We call on Syria to move forward on destruction of these facilities while talks continue on the more complex underground facilities. We see no genuine reason for further delay.

The Chemical Weapons Convention requires that the Syrian chemical weapons programme must be completely and verifiably eliminated. It is therefore vital that all concerns about discrepancies or gaps in Syria's declaration to the OPCW are investigated and resolved. The



onus is on Syria to provide the necessary information. It is only by the complete declaration, and then elimination, that the international community can have confidence that the threat posed by these weapons has been removed. We therefore strongly support the Director- General and his staff as they pursue this work and we call on Syria to provide all the necessary information and documentation to resolve all such discrepancies.

The United Kingdom also supports the vital Fact-Finding Mission that the Director- General initiated to establish the facts about the renewed allegations of the use of chemicals weapons in the Syrian conflict in April. An independent and thorough investigation is essential, and we support the continuation of the mission until such time as clear results can be achieved. So therefore we welcome the fact that a preliminary report has now been issued. The findings of the Mission that the allegations of chlorine use are very credible are very significant and require careful and urgent study, including by this Council.

Mr Chairman, I would like to place on record our strong support for the Fact-Finding Mission staff, and strongly condemn the attack against those staff on 27 May while they were attempting to visit relevant sites. We call upon all parties to the conflict to facilitate their work.

I ask that this statement be circulated as an official document of this meeting.

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