



OPCW

Executive Council

Forty-Eighth Meeting
21, 23, and 29 January 2015

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ENGLISH only

NEW ZEALAND

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF NEW ZEALAND
AT THE FORTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Thank you Mr Chairman.

New Zealand continues to follow developments in the Syrian Arab Republic closely and considers it imperative that the Executive Council continues to monitor and cast light on the situation. We therefore welcome the opportunity for further discussion by the Executive Council of the Syrian Arab Republic today.

New Zealand strongly supports the work of the Fact-Finding Mission and would like to express our appreciation to the Mission for its ongoing work in difficult circumstances and for its comprehensive third report. We also commend the Director-General and his team for their dedication and professionalism in completing this important work. As in the previous report, the third report confirms that there is compelling evidence of the use of chlorine as a weapon in the Syrian Arab Republic last year. This has significant implications for peace and security and is of serious concern.

As others have noted, use of chemical weapons by any party strikes at the heart of the Convention, and those responsible must be held to account.

New Zealand is pleased to hear that the destruction of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons production facilities has now begun. At the same time the significant and continued delays in the process are a major concern.

We urge the Syrian Government to do everything in its power to speed up the process.

New Zealand is also concerned about the completeness of the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration. We commend the work of the Declaration Assessments Team and we urge the Syrian Government to cooperate fully to address the outstanding issues that have been identified, in order to achieve the complete destruction of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons programme and to provide us with all the necessary assurances in this regard.

I ask that this statement be considered an official document of the meeting, and posted on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you Mr Chairman.

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