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Executive Council

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GERMANY

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DR CHRISTOPH ISRANG
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY TO
THE OPCW AT THE FIFTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson, Director-General, distinguished colleagues,

Thank you for giving me the floor. Germany would like to clarify why the draft decision presented by the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran could not be accepted in its current form.

We have all noted with grave concern reports regarding the use of chemical weapons in Khan Shaykhun and we all agree that this incident needs to be investigated, those responsible identified and brought to justice.

Germany believes that the mechanisms necessary to investigate the Khan Shaykhun incident are already well established; namely the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission and the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism.

The OPCW Fact-Finding Mission has conducted many investigations in the Syrian Arab Republic since it was established in 2014. It has clearly proven its impartiality, professionalism and dedication in the past years. There is absolutely no reason whatsoever not to rely on the FFM in the framework of its current mandate for the Khan Shaykhun incident. Besides, we see no need to change the composition of the FFM. Results of previous FFM investigations are fully credible and reliable. I can only repeat what I have already said: The FFM's impartiality, professionalism and dedication are out of doubt for Germany.

Furthermore, the FFM has immediately started to investigate this latest grave incident – as it should. Therefore, another unacceptable point of the presented draft decision is that it does not refer in any way to the investigations the FFM has already conducted regarding the Khan Shaykhun incident. Samples have been taken and analysed by four OPCW designated laboratories. The results of these analyses indicate exposure to sarin or a sarin-like substance. Germany strongly supports the Director-General regarding his statement that these results are incontrovertible. Hence, they have to be acknowledged in any report on the Khan Shaykhun incident.

We urge this Council to do everything necessary to support the FFM's ongoing investigations of the Khan Shaykhun incident and to reconvene as soon as the Director-General and the FFM present further information on it.



Also, we strongly urge the JIM to start its own investigation regarding who was responsible immediately once the FFM results are available in writing.

In light of the reasons I have just stated, Germany had no choice but to vote against this draft decision.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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