

THE NETHERLANDS

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PAUL van den IJSSEL PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

**AT THE FIFTY SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
4 APRIL 2018**

Mr Chairperson,

[All protocol observed]

Further to the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria on behalf of the European Union, with which the Netherlands fully associates itself, my delegation wishes to make the following remarks.

Mr. Chairperson,

As we stated before, both in this body and at many other occasions, the Netherlands is shocked by the attack with a military grade nerve agent on British soil. It constitutes a serious threat to our collective security and international law.

The Netherlands strongly condemns this attack with which the perpetrators have exposed innocent civilians to a great risk to their health and well-being.

The Netherlands agrees with the UK governments' assessment that it is highly likely that the Russian Federation is responsible and that there is no plausible alternative explanation.

We stand in unqualified solidarity with the UK and fully support the UK authorities in their investigations. We expect that the Russian Federation provides full disclosure of the Novichok Programme to the OPCW.

Though currently not a member of the Executive Council my delegation could not agree with the draft decision that was tabled by the Russian Federation.

Mr. Chairperson

On this very day one year ago another terrible incident which involved a chemical weapon took place: the attack on Khan Sheikhoun on April 4th of 2017. It was very appropriate that we commemorated the victims in this hall. Later today the UN Security Council will also remember this event.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind us all that no action against the perpetrators has been taken until this day. It is of utmost importance to continue our efforts to advance accountability for the use of chemical weapons in Syria and elsewhere. The Netherlands is willing to consider different possibilities to increase accountability. We once again call upon all countries to take their responsibility as parties to the CWC (and if appropriate as members of the UNSC) and act accordingly.

Thank you for your attention.