



S/2213/2023  
27 September 2023  
ENGLISH only

**NOTE BY THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT****ACCESSION OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC  
TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION: TEN YEARS ON**

1. This Note recounts the accession of the Syrian Arab Republic to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (hereinafter “the Convention”), and recalls what has been achieved since then towards the Syrian Arab Republic’s compliance with the Convention by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)—comprising the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”), the policy-making organs, and individual States Parties—and by the Syrian Arab Republic itself, as well as by other international bodies. This Note also outlines what is yet to be completed in order for the Syrian Arab Republic to fully meet its obligations, and outlines the priorities to be considered by States Parties in this regard.

**ACCESSION OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC TO THE CONVENTION**

2. On 14 September 2013, the Syrian Arab Republic deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations its instrument of accession, thereby acceding to the Convention on 14 October 2013. Upon depositing the instrument, the Syrian Arab Republic declared that it would apply the Convention provisionally, pending its formal accession. Correspondingly, it committed, inter alia, “to cooperate with the Organization in the exercise of all its functions”, in accordance with paragraph 7 of Article VII of the Convention.
3. Paragraph 8 of Article IV and paragraph 10 of Article V of the Convention stipulate that if a State Party ratifies or accedes to the Convention after the 10-year period for destruction (namely, after 29 April 2007), it shall destroy its chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) as soon as possible. The order of destruction and procedures for stringent verification measures shall be determined by the Executive Council (hereinafter “the Council”).
4. Accordingly, as the Syrian Arab Republic acceded to the Convention more than 10 years after its entry into force, the Council therefore adopted a decision entitled “Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons” (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013). On the same day, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2118 (2013), which endorsed the Council’s decision. The adoption of both resulted in the establishment of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission in Syria (hereinafter “the Joint Mission”) on 16 October 2013, which was tasked with achieving the timely elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme in the safest and most secure manner possible, given that the Syrian Arab Republic had stated that it would not be able to carry out destruction activities itself, as normally required by the Convention.



5. On 19 September 2013 and 2 October 2013, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted provisional information on the names, types, and quantities of its chemical weapons agents, as well as the types of munitions, their locations, forms of storage, and information on production, research, and development facilities. Simultaneously, the Syrian Arab Republic requested assistance from the Secretariat with preparing its initial declaration.
6. The Secretariat provided the requested declaration assistance and the Syrian Arab Republic submitted its initial declaration on 23 October 2013, as required under Articles III and VI of the Convention. The submission of the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration was followed by several amendments thereto.

#### **DESTRUCTION OF DECLARED CHEMICAL WEAPONS AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS PRODUCTION FACILITIES**

7. In October 2013, the Joint Mission began its work to oversee the destruction of the declared chemical weapons and CWPFs.
8. Several States Parties contributed in kind to the destruction of the 1,300 metric tonnes of chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, inter alia through the provision of ships and port facilities for the purpose of transportation and destruction. Further information on the contributions of States Parties to destruction and to other aspects are outlined below.
9. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In line with the above-mentioned provisions in the Convention, the decision established a timeline for destruction and provided for the transportation of the declared stockpiles out of the Syrian Arab Republic for this purpose with the assistance of States Parties. The completion of the destruction of all declared chemicals was to be achieved no later than 30 June 2014.
10. On 22 June 2014, the last shipment of declared chemicals was removed from the Syrian Arab Republic. The Joint Mission's mandate expired on 30 September 2014, at which point the Secretariat had verified the destruction of 98% of chemical weapons declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, including all Category 1 chemicals.
11. On 4 January 2016, the Secretariat verified the destruction of 100% of the Category 1 and Category 2 chemical weapons declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. On 12 July 2018, the Secretariat verified the destruction of all 27 CWPFs declared by the Syrian Arab Republic.

#### **SHORTCOMINGS IN THE INITIAL DECLARATION**

12. As mentioned above, in accordance with subparagraph 38(e) of Article VIII of the Convention, the Secretariat provided the Syrian Arab Republic with the requested assistance with the submission of its initial declaration and undertook a review of all declarations and information submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic to verify the implementation of the Convention and the decisions of the policy-making organs. As a result, the Secretariat identified a number of gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies in the initial declaration and related submissions, which were raised with the Syrian National Authority.

13. During the Fortieth Meeting of the Council in April 2014, several States Parties expressed concerns over the completeness and accuracy of the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration. In accordance with the Convention, decisions of the policy-making organs, and resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, on 11 April 2014, the Director-General informed the Council of his intention to dispatch a team of experts from the Secretariat, later known as the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), to the Syrian Arab Republic, with the task of verifying that the declaration submitted can be considered accurate and complete.
14. The first round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority took place in April 2014. At the outset, the DAT presented to the Syrian Arab Republic its methodology and the criteria for the assessment of its initial declaration; these were included in the DAT's first report (EC-77/P/S/1, dated 2 October 2014), which was noted by the Council. Since then, the DAT has carried out extensive activities in the Syrian Arab Republic, the outcome of which has depended on the engagement of the Syrian National Authority.
15. A significant impediment to the work of the DAT was the reported absence of original documentation to support the initial declaration. In many instances, the Syrian Arab Republic stated that such documentation either did not exist or was unobtainable.
16. Considering the reported absence of documentation, additional measures were agreed upon with the Syrian National Authority to generate the data and information required to resolve outstanding issues. These included technical meetings and consultations with Syrian experts, interviews with relevant personnel involved with the Syrian chemical weapons programme, visits to declared sites or other locations of interest, and the collection of samples and the subsequent analysis thereof. Since the beginning of the DAT's work, the Syrian Arab Republic took part in and witnessed all the Secretariat's activities, including the conduct of interviews and the collection of samples. The DAT provided a copy of all audio and video recordings, pictures, sample analysis results, and all other materials generated through this process.
17. To date, a total of 24 rounds of consultations and two limited in-country deployments have been conducted. The Syrian Arab Republic provided the required security and logistical support, together with the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The Secretariat has kept the Council informed of the DAT's work through regular briefings and reports, as mandated.
18. The Secretariat, through the DAT, has raised and reported a total of 24 outstanding issues related to the gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies noted in the initial and subsequent declarations by the Syrian Arab Republic. Of these, four issues were resolved with the cooperation of the Syrian Arab Republic, while 20 issues remain unresolved. The resolution of several outstanding issues is pending minor actions by the Syrian Arab Republic (namely, the submission of documents or declarations), whereas some other outstanding issues require further work, such as field visits, interviews, and technical meetings. Over the years, a significant amount of information was obtained by the DAT through these rounds of consultations.

19. While some information contributed to the resolution of four outstanding issues, other information allowed the Secretariat to better understand other outstanding issues and conduct a more comprehensive assessment of the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration, in accordance with its mandate.
20. As a result of the Secretariat's work, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted 17 amendments to its initial declaration, declaring additional and previously undeclared elements of its chemical weapons programme, as follows:
  - (a) one CWPF and four research and development facilities, including the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC), were declared;
  - (b) research and development activities related to five previously undeclared chemical warfare agents were declared;
  - (c) several thousands of previously undeclared chemical munitions were declared or otherwise acknowledged by the Syrian Arab Republic;
  - (d) previously undeclared equipment was discovered, declared, and destroyed at several sites; and
  - (e) details of chemical weapons testing activities were declared.
21. The substance of the unresolved outstanding issues is of serious concern. It involves:
  - (a) *Unverified quantities of chemical weapons*: There remain several hundred metric tonnes of chemical warfare agents and precursors, and several thousands of large-calibre chemical munitions, the fate of which cannot be fully verified by the Secretariat in the absence of sufficient information.
  - (b) *Undeclared production of chemical weapons*: The Syrian Arab Republic is yet to declare all undeclared types and quantities of chemical weapons produced and/or weaponised at declared facilities, as requested by the DAT.
  - (c) *Declaration requirements arising from Council decision EC-94/DEC.2 (dated 9 July 2020)*: The Syrian Arab Republic is yet to declare all undeclared chemical weapons, including chlorine and sarin, used in chemical attacks, or other undeclared chemical weapons it possesses, together with related undeclared facilities where such chemical weapons were developed, produced, stockpiled, and operationally stored for delivery.
22. All the above-mentioned issues give rise to concerns regarding the potential existence of undeclared stockpiles of chemical weapons, activities, and/or facilities.
23. Up to February 2021, the Syrian Arab Republic facilitated and participated in 24 rounds of consultations. Since April 2021, all the Secretariat's efforts to organise the twenty-fifth round of consultations have remained unsuccessful, due to the Syrian Arab Republic's refusal to issue a visa to the DAT's lead technical expert, in addition to its imposition of financial and other demands, which are not in line with the Syrian Arab Republic's obligations.

24. In May 2022, the Secretariat proposed that declaration-related issues be addressed through the submission of pending declarations and documents, and in September 2022 it provided the Syrian Arab Republic with the list of pending declarations and other documents requested by the DAT on multiple occasions since 2019. Although the Syrian Arab Republic agreed to this proposal, it has not, to date, submitted any declarations or documents that could assist in closing some of the outstanding issues.
25. In January and April 2023, the Secretariat deployed a reduced team composed of several members of the DAT to the Syrian Arab Republic to conduct limited in-country activities. Since these activities could not include technical consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority, the outcomes remained limited.
26. On 22 and 23 June 2023, a meeting between delegations of the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic was held in Beirut, Lebanon. The resumption of rounds of consultations was discussed as the best possible way to achieve the required outcomes related to the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration. The Syrian Arab Republic has still not confirmed its agreement to conduct the twenty-fifth round of consultations without conditions.
27. The Secretariat, through the DAT, remains committed to verifying the Syrian Arab Republic's full implementation of all its declaration obligations under the Convention, Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1, EC-81/DEC.4 (dated 23 March 2016), EC-83/DEC.5 (dated 11 November 2016), and EC-94/DEC.2, as well as decisions C-SS-4/DEC.3 (dated 27 June 2018) and C-25/DEC.9 (dated 21 April 2021) of the Conference of the States Parties (hereinafter "the Conference"), and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118(2013). The full and proactive engagement of the Syrian Arab Republic remains instrumental for the process of clarifying shortcomings identified in its initial declaration by the Secretariat. Considering the identified gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies that remain unresolved, the Secretariat assesses that the declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic still cannot be considered accurate and complete.

#### **USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

28. Even while the destruction of initially declared chemical weapons was nearing completion, repeated allegations of the use of toxic chemicals—including chlorine—for hostile purposes were reported to have occurred in April 2014 in the Hama and Idlib Governorates of the Syrian Arab Republic.
29. Consequently, on 29 April 2014, the Director-General established the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM), which was mandated "to establish facts surrounding allegations of use of chlorine in the Syrian Arab Republic". The terms of reference governing the FFM's work were agreed upon with the Syrian Arab Republic in May 2014. Council decision EC-M-48/DEC.1 (dated 4 February 2015) and United Nations Security Council resolution 2209(2015) (dated 6 March 2015) supported the continuation of the FFM's work.
30. Since its inception, the FFM has investigated 71 allegations and has issued 20 reports. In 14 instances, the FFM confirmed the use of chlorine, in three instances the FFM confirmed the use of sulfur mustard, and in three instances the FFM confirmed the use of sarin.

31. On 7 August 2015, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2235(2015), establishing the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). Its mandate was to identify, to the greatest extent feasible, individuals, entities, groups, or governments that acted as the perpetrators, organisers, or sponsors of, or that were otherwise involved in the use of chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic in which the FFM determines, or has determined, that a specific incident in the Syrian Arab Republic involved, or likely involved, the use of chemicals as weapons. The resolution also reaffirmed the Council's decision in response to violations of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118(2013) to impose measures under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.
32. The JIM published seven reports in total. In its third and fourth reports, it found that the Syrian Arab Armed Forces were responsible for the use of chlorine as a weapon in three instances, and that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levent (ISIL) was responsible for the use of sulfur mustard as a weapon in one instance. In its seventh report, the JIM found that ISIL was responsible for the use of sulfur mustard in one instance, and that the Syrian Arab Republic was responsible for the release of sarin in one instance.
33. In decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Council decided that the Secretariat should conduct inspections in the Syrian Arab Republic at the sites identified by the JIM, in its third and fourth reports, as involved in the weaponisation, storage, delivery, and use of toxic chemicals as weapons. The planning for these inspections has been ongoing, and their conduct depends on the security situation on the way to and in the areas concerned.
34. In that same decision, the Council also decided that the Secretariat shall conduct inspections, including sampling and analysis, twice a year at the Barzah facilities of the SSRC, and twice a year at the Jamrayah SSRC facilities. The Secretariat has been conducting these mandated activities since then. During these inspections, further issues—in particular the detection of a Schedule 2.B.04 chemical and the observation of large quantities of a chemical of a dual-use nature in storage—have arisen and are pending resolution.
35. On 17 November 2017, the United Nations Security Council could not reach an agreement to renew the JIM's mandate.
36. Following the non-renewal of the JIM's mandate by the United Nations Security Council, in decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 the Conference condemned in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons, and further reaffirmed that those responsible—be they States or non-State actors—should be held accountable. The use of chlorine by the Syrian Arab Republic in three attacks carried out in 2014 and 2015 was specifically condemned, as was the use of sarin on 4 April 2017, as reported by the JIM. The decision expressed regret that the JIM's mandate had not been renewed.
37. It further noted with concern that the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic, by direct implication, established that the Syrian Arab Republic had failed to declare and destroy all its chemical weapons and CWPFs, and demanded that it should immediately do so, and cease all use of chemical weapons.

38. The decision also stipulated that the Secretariat should put into place arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic in those instances in which the FFM determines or has determined that use or likely use occurred, and in cases for which the JIM had not issued a report. The decision further stipulated that the Secretariat should report on its investigations to the Council and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
39. Consequently, an Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) was established within the Secretariat to carry out these tasks. In its investigations, the IIT undertakes an impartial, objective, and independent examination of all available information, in compliance with the best practices of international fact-finding bodies and commissions of inquiry, and in accordance with applicable OPCW procedures.
40. The IIT became operational in June 2019. Since then, it has issued three reports (S/1867/2020, dated 8 April 2020; S/1943/2021, dated 12 April 2021; and S/2125/2023, dated 27 January 2023) on five incidents of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic: in Ltamenah (24, 25, and 30 March 2017), Saraqib (4 February 2018), and Douma (7 April 2018). In all five incidents, the IIT had reasonable grounds to believe that the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons were the armed forces of the Syrian Arab Republic.
41. The IIT reports were transmitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and presented to both the Council and the United Nations Security Council. Since the establishment of the IIT, the Director-General has addressed the United Nations Security Council on five occasions concerning the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.
42. In line with paragraph 12 of C-SS-4/DEC.3, the Secretariat also preserves and provides information to the investigation mechanism established by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 71/248 (2016) (the International Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011), and to any relevant investigatory entities established under the auspices of the United Nations.
43. The Secretariat has also been working over the past four years to ensure the transfer and integration of the knowledge and skills acquired by the IIT and other missions in Syria to other units of the Secretariat to ensure capability is maintained in the field of the use of chemical weapons, as per its mandate.
44. Since its establishment, and despite regular requests from the Secretariat in the form of letters and notes verbales, to date the IIT has received no cooperation from the Syrian Arab Republic, nor has it been granted access to its territory, which contravenes the Syrian Arab Republic's obligations under paragraph 7 of Article VII of the Convention.
45. In paragraph 5 of its decision EC-94/DEC.2, the Council requested the Syrian Arab Republic, inter alia, to declare to the Secretariat within 90 days the facilities where the chemical weapons used in the March 2017 Ltamenah attacks reported by the IIT were developed, produced, stockpiled, and stored, and to declare all the chemical weapons currently in its possession.

46. In its decision C-25/DEC.9, the Conference decided, in line with paragraph 1 of Article XII of the Convention, to suspend some of the rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic, namely: to vote in the Conference and the Council; to stand for election to the Council; and to hold any office of the Conference, Council, or subsidiary organs, pending completion of the measures contained in paragraph 5 of Council decision EC-94/DEC.2. To date, the Syrian Arab Republic has not fulfilled any measures required under EC-94/DEC.2.
47. As at the date of this Note, more than 200 notes verbales from the Permanent Representation of the Syrian Arab Republic have been received and processed by the Secretariat. The content of many of these notes has concerned one or more alleged activities by armed groups on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, in particular:
- (a) the storage of chemicals or weapons;
  - (b) the reported movement of chemicals or weapons;
  - (c) the alleged intent to use chemical weapons or toxic chemicals as weapons; and
  - (d) the reported intent to stage the use of chemical weapons or toxic chemicals as weapons by armed groups.
48. The Secretariat has consistently examined whether the information in the notes verbales could be linked to allegations under its review concerning the use of toxic chemicals as weapons. No such link has ever appeared between the content of these notes verbales and the Secretariat's investigations.

#### **CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC**

49. Since its accession to the Convention in 2013, the Syrian Arab Republic has benefitted from programmes of the Secretariat—sometimes in cooperation with or under the sponsorship of other States Parties<sup>1</sup>—in all fields related to international cooperation and assistance. Overall, 27 participants from the Syrian Arab Republic benefitted from 12 activities, training, and programmes, including: a symposium on bridging international gaps in chemical security; courses on analytical skills development; a basic assistance and protection course; courses on the medical aspects of assistance and protection against chemical weapons; a course on national implementation of the Convention; and in 2017, a national legal workshop for the Syrian Arab Republic, in which Syrian Government officials worked with Secretariat experts to produce a draft text of its national implementing legislation, as well as an action plan outlining the steps required for its adoption. To date, the Syrian Arab Republic has not adopted any of the necessary measures to implement its obligations under the Convention as required by paragraph 1 of Article VII, including the enactment of penal legislation with respect to activities prohibited under the Convention, such as the use of chemical weapons.

---

<sup>1</sup> Algeria, China, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of).



## RESOURCES AND ADAPTATION

50. Paragraph 16 of Article IV of the Convention stipulates that “[e]ach State Party shall meet the costs of destruction of chemical weapons it is obliged to destroy. It shall also meet the costs of verification of storage and destruction of these chemical weapons unless the Executive Council decides otherwise”. The sum of EUR 4.9 million remains due to the Organisation by the Syrian Arab Republic.
51. The Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons was created in October 2013. By the time of its dissolution in 2016, it had received a total contribution of EUR 50.3 million. Contributions were received from 24 States Parties and other donors.<sup>2</sup> A second Syria trust fund for other related activities was set up and closed during the same period (2013–2016). It disbursed a total of EUR 8.2 million. Contributions were received from 15 States Parties and other donors.<sup>3</sup> This includes the contributions that were originally made to the previous OPCW Trust Fund for Syria and that have, at the request of the donor, subsequently been transferred, in part or in whole, to the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons.
52. Substantial in-kind contributions to the destruction of the Syrian Arab Republic’s chemical weapons were also made by 19 States Parties and other donors,<sup>4</sup> inter alia through the provision of ships and port facilities for the purpose of transportation and destruction.
53. The Secretariat has devoted significant regular resources related to the Syrian Arab Republic’s chemical weapons dossier, including but not limited to personnel and other costs in the Inspectorate Division, the Office of the Legal Adviser, the Secretariat for the Policy-Making Organs, and the Verification Division.
54. The Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, which presently include the work of the DAT and the IIT, as well as the biannual inspections of the SSRC and the two sites identified in paragraph 8 of EC-94/DEC.2. As at the date of this Note, total contributions and pledges to this fund stood at EUR 39.4 million. Contribution agreements had been concluded with 23 States Parties and other donors.<sup>5</sup> Since 2013, the Secretariat has consistently adapted its operations in the Syrian Arab Republic to meet changing needs and circumstances, adjusting its presence accordingly. Between 2018 and 2023, the Secretariat gradually adapted its posture in implementing its mandated activities related

---

<sup>2</sup> Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the European Union.

<sup>3</sup> Andorra, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

<sup>4</sup> Austria, Belarus, Canada, China, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Norway, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

<sup>5</sup> Australia, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

to the Syrian chemical weapons dossier. This has translated into a reduction of almost 60% of its costs. By way of illustration, as at July 2023, the Secretariat no longer requires a continual presence in Damascus to prepare, from Headquarters, future deployments to the Syrian Arab Republic. The Secretariat will continue to adapt its posture and reduce its costs further, while ensuring its capacity to continue to fulfil its mandated activities.

#### **POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

55. As at July 2023, all chemical weapons stockpiles declared by States Parties have been destroyed. Considering that a further three States acceded to the Convention after the Syrian Arab Republic, this means that the verified destruction of chemical weapons is now near universal, with the declarations of 193 States accounted for.
56. This represents a historic moment for the Organisation that should make it possible to further intensify its efforts to:
  - (a) prevent and deter the re-emergence of chemical weapons;
  - (b) strengthen the capacity of States Parties to fully implement the Convention;
  - (c) adequately prepare for the accession of additional States;
  - (d) meet the opportunities and challenges posed by scientific and technological advances; and
  - (e) maintain and reinforce the capabilities of the Organisation accordingly.
57. Managing and adapting the knowledge and capabilities within the Secretariat is an important means of addressing these issues. In turn, this requires the continued integration of expertise gained from the Secretariat's history of verifying destruction, as well as from its non-routine and contingency missions, including those concerning the chemical weapons programme of, and use of chemical weapons in, the Syrian Arab Republic.
58. The reported and documented uses of chemical weapons and unresolved issues concerning said chemical weapons programme continue to hinder the Organisation's full focus on its future orientation. Ten years after the Syrian Arab Republic's accession to the Convention, and in spite of the efforts made by the Secretariat, the policy-making organs, States Parties, the United Nations Security Council, United Nations entities—including the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, UNDSS, and UNOPS—and the Syrian Arab Republic itself, a number of issues concerning its chemical weapons programme and the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic remain unresolved. These matters give rise to continued concerns regarding the potential existence of undeclared stockpiles of chemical weapons, undeclared activities or facilities, and the possibility of the further use of chemical weapons.

#### **INITIAL DECLARATION**

59. The Secretariat assesses that the declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic still cannot be considered accurate or complete in accordance with the Convention, Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1, EC-81/DEC.4, EC-83/DEC.5, and EC-94/DEC.2, Conference decisions C-SS-4/DEC.3 and C-25/DEC.9, and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

60. The Secretariat assesses that the Syrian Arab Republic's full and proactive engagement with the DAT is crucial for the Secretariat to be able to verify the resolution of the shortcomings identified by the Secretariat in the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration. The Syrian Arab Republic remains under obligation to submit a declaration that can be considered accurate and complete.

#### **USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

61. Reports of several independent international bodies including the FFM, JIM, the IIT, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, and the World Health Organization, have found that chemical weapons have been used in the Syrian Arab Republic since its accession to the Convention. The Syrian Arab Republic should ensure full cooperation with the FFM and is further obliged to extend full cooperation to the IIT in accordance with the Convention and Conference decisions C-SS-4/DEC.3 and C-25/DEC.9.
62. The Syrian Arab Republic remains under the scrutiny of the policy-making organs. The Convention and the work of the Organisation contribute to ensuring that those identified as perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons should be held accountable.

#### **RESOURCES AND ADAPTATION**

63. The Secretariat will continue to adapt its operations in the Syrian Arab Republic to meet current needs by implementing its mandates in the most effective and efficient manner. The Centre for Chemistry and Technology will be used to integrate expertise gained from the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles and from contingency missions, including challenge inspections, investigations of alleged use, technical assistance visits, and other activities concerning the Syrian chemical weapons programme.
64. Adequate and predictable funding for the completion of all Syria-related mandates, remains key in order for the Organisation to remain empowered to deliver on all its mandated activities in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Secretariat calls on States Parties to continue to financially support these activities. Additionally, it is important to address the sums due to the Organisation related to the costs of destruction of the Syrian declared chemical weapons stockpiles and related facilities, pursuant to paragraph 16 of Article IV of the Convention.
65. The Secretariat will continue to implement all mandated activities related to the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons dossier and will continue to report to the policy-making organs.