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REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR UGUR DOGAN PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY TO THE OPCW AT THE
SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairman,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

First and foremost, allow me to congratulate Ambassador Peter Goosen on his election to the Chair of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. I have no doubt that Ambassador Goosen's experience within the OPCW and the able guidance of Director-General Ahmet Üzümcü will help the States Parties to take the necessary steps for the continuation of the success of the Convention in the years to come.

Let me also commend my colleague Ambassador Paul Arkwright, as the outgoing Chair, for his contributions to the success of the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, as well as to the work of the OPCW, as the Chair since the previous Conference.

This year we celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Convention is the embodiment of an effective multilateral cooperation which bans an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. This is a significant achievement. As every achievement comes with a responsibility, it is incumbent upon all the States Parties to keep the Convention relevant with the realities of our time and the challenges ahead.

In his address at the OPCW Headquarters on 18 April 2012, the President of the Republic of Turkey Abdullah Gül reiterated Turkey's support for the effective implementation of the Convention. Having stressed the importance of a weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone in the Middle East, President Gül also underlined the fact that the core objective of the Convention, namely the destruction of all chemical weapons and prevention of their re-emergence, can be achieved through full universalisation of the Convention. To this end, Turkey supports the efforts by the Technical Secretariat to encourage the eight States who are outside the Convention regime to become party to the Convention without further ado.

In the past century, countless numbers of victims suffered from the use of the chemical weapons throughout the world. Bitter memories of the people in countries neighbouring Turkey still linger. It is indeed an unfortunate fact that the threat of use of chemical weapons endures yet again in this day and age. This challenge requires constant vigilance of the States Parties. In this respect, Turkey welcomes the recent framework concluded by the Technical Secretariat and the United Nations last September. Turkey fully supports the initiatives that



will enhance the readiness of the Technical Secretariat to react promptly in cases of alleged use of chemical weapons.

Despite the inability of the three Possessor States to meet the extended deadline for destruction of their chemical weapons stockpiles being a shared concern, Turkey welcomes their commitment and activities currently under way aimed at fulfilling their responsibilities. We also expect the start of the destruction of all chemical weapons in Iraq as soon as possible.

With respect to countering the potential use of chemical weapons by non-State actors, we believe that the best approach to address this threat is the full implementation of the Convention's provisions. In this way, as States Parties, we can do our bit to complement the efforts stipulated in the United Nation's Global-Counter Terrorism Strategy. In this context, we should also make sure that assistance and protection against chemical weapons should continue to be the focal point of our collective efforts.

The Third Review Conference, due to be held on 9-19 April 2013 in The Hague, will provide us with the chance to decide on our future trajectory on the prohibition of chemical weapons. Seizing this opportunity, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Nassimi Baghli for the excellent job she has done as the Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group. Likewise, the work of the Technical Secretariat under the effective leadership of Director-General Üzümcü is worthwhile mentioning. We value the assessment made by the Technical Secretariat in its Report on the Review of the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention since the Second Review Conference. We also look forward to the report of the Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on the outcome of the first phase of consultations that wrapped up a couple of weeks ago, for the preparations of the Third Review Conference.

Before I conclude, allow me to express our full support to the work under way with a view to streamlining the working methods of the Technical Secretariat. Last but not least, I would like to extend my gratitude to the dedicated staff of the OPCW in their contributions for the implementation of the objectives set forth in the Convention.

Let me reiterate Turkey's commitment to the principles and objectives enshrined in the Chemical Weapons Convention and their implementation. Thus we render our full support to the activities of the OPCW to fulfil its core goal, a world free of chemical weapons.

Thank you.

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