

## **STATEMENT**

**by the HEAD of the DELEGATION of the SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

**The AMBASSADOR JAROSLAV CHLEBO**

**19th CSP of the OPCW**

- Madame Chair, Mr. Director General, Mme. Special Representative of the UNSG, Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen
- Let me join my before-speakers and warmly welcome the Ambassador Vesela Mrden Korac in the seat of the Chair of the Conference under whose stewardship, I am convinced, the Conference will come to positive conclusions. I would like to express our gratitude also to the work of outgoing Chair of the conference Ambassador Sa'ad Abdul Majeed Ibrahim Al-Ali.
- At the outset of my statement I would like to align myself with the statement delivered by Mr. Jacek Bylica, Special Envoy of the European External Action Service on behalf of Italian Presidency of the EU.
- Slovakia acknowledges the importance and appraises persistent effort of international community in getting rid the world of chemical weapons. We try to be a valid member of our organization by honouring all our commitments. While doing so we take under consideration our capacities and focus ourselves on our best abilities.
- Madame Chairperson,
- Continued economic malaise, turbulences in international relations, their complexity, all that has reminded us again the peace and stability is not given to us for granted but are the results of the effort performed by numerous stakeholders. Differing interests require strong leadership and wisdom of those who have the privilege to hold the steering wheel. In context of our organisation and its activities it gives me real pleasure to commend the role and the performance of OPCW DG Ambassador Ahmed Uzumcu who was able to conduct his tasks in sometimes rough waters accordingly, with necessary hindsight. Our credit goes to the staff of the OPCW as well for discharge of its duties in line with expectations of us, member states and their delegations here in The Hague.
- Since elimination of Syrian chemical weapons program preoccupied us throughout whole this year, one cannot escape reference to it. As active member of community of countries seeking chemical disarmament, Slovakia joined the effort by financial contribution to the Trust Fund for Syria and making those resources available not only for removal of chemical weapons from Syria, but also for other related purposes. At the end of this year we can look back with satisfaction, major goal had been achieved, though under extraordinary circumstances and with some additional complications.

- All we know this is not the end of the story; innocent people are killed as new allegations of the use of chemicals as weapons continue to be made. This constitutes a clear breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention and UNSC resolution 2118. Geopolitical or other political dimension of situation in the region can not be accepted as an excuse for occurrence of these incidents. Slovakia therefore fully supports continuation of the activities of the Fact Finding Mission and those of the Declaration Assessment Team of the Technical Secretariat and appointment of Ambassador Medeiros as the Director-General's Special Representative on Syria. All perpetrators of these heinous crimes must be brought to justice.
- But Syria issue is not the only one and can not distract us from paying attention to other pressing issues of chemical disarmament. Convergence of biological and chemical weapons, incapacitating agents, sea dumped chemical weapons, to mention only few of them, must figure out in our agenda as well.
- To honour your patience I am not going to elaborate number of the other issues which I will cover only under the title, follow-ups to the 3rd review conference conclusions, among which high degree of consideration by us is given to effectiveness of EC working methods.
- Madame Chairperson,
- Slovak Republic does not possess any chemical weapons and fulfils all its commitments stemming out of its signature under CWC. That allows us to focus on long-term cooperation with the OPCW through the range of training activities build upon possibility to work with live agents which exist on our side and additional activities aimed at implementation of Article X of the Convention. We create the space for participants from different training centers to discuss lessons learned as well as best practices for assistance and protection related training. Mentioned activities helped maintain and further develop the capacity of the Secretariat to conduct routine inspections as well as for other operational situations that the OPCW might face as part of its obligations under the Convention and we are ready to continue in providence of these services in the future.
- To conclude, let me say, we are looking forward to working with all delegations in a constructive and open manner to meet the challenges standing in front of us and we trust that this session of the Conference will be an important element of our common effort to achieve the world free of chemical weapons.
- I would like to request this statement to be circulated as official document of the 19th session of the Conference of the State Parties.