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CYPRUS

**STATEMENT BY H.E. DR KYRIACÓS P. KOUROS
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Madam Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset I would like to congratulate and wish every success to Ambassador Vesela Mrđen Korać in executing her duties as the Chair of the Conference of the States Parties.

I would also like to express our deep appreciation to the outgoing Chairperson Ambassador Sa'ad Abdul Majeed Ibrahim Al-Ali, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Executive Council, as well to the Facilitators for their very significant work for the benefit of the OPCW and all its Member States.

Moreover, I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the OPCW Director-General, Mr Ahmet Üzümcü, for his hard work and dedication to the lofty objectives of this Organisation, as well as all the personnel of the OPCW Technical Secretariat for their dedication to the principles of the Convention. I also wish to all the delegations a productive Conference.

The Republic of Cyprus aligns itself with the statement of the distinguished representative of the European Union.

Cyprus has been a staunch supporter of the OPCW since its outset. It signed the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993 and ratified and acceded to it in 1998. We remain committed to the OPCW mission and values and we fully share the vision of a world free of chemical weapons.

The year 2015 will mark the centennial of the first large-scale use of chemical weapons in Ieper, Belgium. This commemoration offers an opportunity to remember the horrors of Ieper and other cities and countries that suffered chemical weapons attacks; to pay respect to all the victims of chemical weapons; to reflect on the significant progress since then in the collective effort for the elimination of chemical weapons and on the reasons for the formation of the OPCW. Unfortunately, the Syrian crisis reminds us that the use of chemical weapons does



not remain a horrifying chapter in the history of humankind. We should therefore remain vigilant until we achieve the full elimination of chemical weapons.

The Third Review Conference has provided the necessary guidance for the work of the Organisation for the period ahead of us. We should concentrate on the practical implementation of that guidance and on the effort to ensure that the OPCW will adjust to the challenges and developments in the contemporary and future security environment. For example, one such important initiative was presented by the delegation of Germany at the Forty-Sixth Meeting of the Executive Council and refers to a “New Ethical and Moral Guideline for Chemists”.

The destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons constitutes a landmark to the history of this Organisation and a collective achievement of multilateral diplomacy. The OPCW and United Nations staff has demonstrated perseverance and courage under very difficult security conditions and we therefore reiterate our respect to their dedication and their work. We should all be grateful to the countries that contributed financially or in kind to this historic operation. The Republic of Cyprus is part of this collective multilateral effort as the host country of the support base of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission, while it has also offered infrastructure and facilities to other States which contributed to the destruction of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons. As an extremely close neighbouring country with a great interest in the stability and security of the Eastern Mediterranean we remain willing to help and cooperate with the OPCW on its remaining efforts on this issue, if need arises.

Despite the significant progress achieved on the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons, serious issues remain outstanding. Our hope is that the destruction of the 12 chemical weapon production facilities will proceed as soon as possible, while at the same time safeguarding the security of the involved personnel. We also call for the full cooperation of the Syrian Arab Republic with the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team. More importantly, the conclusions of the second report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission remain a cause of serious concern. The Republic of Cyprus unequivocally condemns the use of chemical weapons by any party under any circumstances and holds that those responsible should be held accountable. We therefore support the decision of the Director-General for the continuation of the work of the Fact-Finding Mission.

This Conference will also address issues of great importance for the operation of this Organisation in the coming year, such as its Programme and Budget for 2015, as well as the more long-term vision for the future of this Organisation. The Conference will also reflect on the significant efforts for achieving the full universality of the Convention, the equally important OPCW Programme for Africa, as well as the destruction of existing stockpiles of chemical weapons. We look forward to a productive discussion of all the issues in the agenda of the Conference.

In ending, I request that this statement is circulated as an official document of the Nineteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties and to be published on the OPCW website and extranet.

Thank you.