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POLAND

**STATEMENT BY H.E. DR JAN BORKOWSKI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF POLAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Thank you Madam Chairperson,

At the outset of my intervention let me congratulate you on the appointment as the Chairperson of the Conference. I wish to assure you of the Polish delegation's full support and cooperation in the fulfillment of your important mandate. We have no doubts that under your leadership we will be able to reach a successful conclusion of the Conference.

Poland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

Madam Chairperson, Director-General, distinguished delegates,

The past 12 months were marked by tremendous efforts of the international community, including the staff of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission, to eliminate the Syrian chemical weapons programme. Since the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties the OPCW's Executive Council has held 11 special meetings to coordinate and monitor the process. Poland welcomes the removal of the Syrian chemical weapons under extraordinary circumstances and ambitious time frame and expresses its appreciation to everyone who contributed to that process. Unfortunately, the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme has not been finished yet and still much remains to be done. The destruction of the remaining chemical weapons production facilities should start without any further delay. The Government of Poland has contributed to this effort financially. Furthermore, the process of assessing the Syrian declarations should continue. It is therefore important that the OPCW Executive Council actively functions and maintains its decision-making and monitoring role. We support the established practice of special sessions of the Council to deal with the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

It is my honour and pleasure to report today that the United Nations resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which is introduced by Poland every year as the sole sponsor, has been adopted in the United Nations First Committee after intensive and sometimes difficult negotiations. Although one delegation requested a vote on the draft resolution, the final result is very positive and encouraging. The text of the resolution received the unanimous support of 175 countries participating in the vote. There were no votes against or abstentions. The text of the resolution received the support of some States not Party to the Convention.



Since the process of the adoption of the Chemical Weapons Convention resolution is based more and more on the work in The Hague and influences the Chemical Weapons Convention implementation process, we plan to share our lessons learned from the process conducted this year at the United Nations.

Last year we saw a growing number of chemical security and safety threats, including the use of toxic chemicals as weapons and means of terror, and increasing numbers of accidents with toxic chemicals. The international community should address these chemical threats and challenges in a comprehensive and effective manner.

Poland undertakes efforts to reduce chemical threats and enhance chemical safety and security. We support an active engagement of the relevant international organisations, including the EU, INTERPOL, and OSCE, chemical industry, academia and non-governmental organisations. Poland co-chairs, with Ukraine, the Chemical Security Sub-Working Group within the Global Partnership against Weapons of Mass Destruction. The International Centre for Chemical Safety and Security in Warsaw (ICCSS) plays a role as the non-governmental organisation in promoting solutions towards a global chemical safety and security culture.

The OPCW should actively join international efforts to enhance chemical safety and security. We welcome, in this regard the timely event of the symposium on bridging international gaps in chemical security, organised on 26 November by the OPCW and supported by the US delegation. The symposium offered many concrete proposals which should be further considered.

The Third Review Conference, chaired under the Polish Presidency, offered a real opportunity to reinvigorate OPCW's agenda and comprehensive implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The OPCW has decided to include a special agenda item for the sessions of the Executive Council devoted to the implementation of the Third Review Conference recommendations. We should actively implement this follow-up process and ensure a close cooperation between Member States and the Technical Secretariat and the stakeholders, including industry, academia and NGOs.

Before concluding I would like to make one historical remark. It took more than a century and the lives of thousands of victims of chemical warfare before the international community was able to agree on a total ban, not only on the use of chemical weapons, but also its development, production and stockpiling. Next year in Ieper we will mark the centenary of the first large scale gas attack. About a month after Ieper, on 31 May 1915, chlorine was used also at the Eastern Front of the Great War in Bolimów (central Poland). Against this background I appeal to us all to show that the Chemical Weapons Convention community is united and capable of addressing challenges to the implementation of the Convention.

I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Nineteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.