



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF AUSTRALIA, CANADA, AND NEW ZEALAND (CANZ) AT THE  
TWENTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES  
AGENDA SUBITEM 9(D): ADDRESSING THE THREAT FROM CHEMICAL WEAPONS USE**

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I have the honour of speaking on this important agenda item on behalf of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

Another year has passed with no progress made on the Syrian chemical weapons dossier. After more than ten years, the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration continues to have significant gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies, including two recently identified new issues. These grave issues were opened because of Syria's failure to explain traces of undeclared chemical warfare agents or their indicators in samples collected by the OPCW Syria missions. The 19 outstanding issues in Syria's initial declaration represent serious and substantive discrepancies and inconsistencies that should gravely concern all States Parties.

CANZ remains deeply concerned by reports of Syria's repeated use of chemical weapons against its own people as documented by the Technical Secretariat. The facts are there for all to see. Serious concerns also remain regarding the potential existence of undeclared stockpiles of chemical weapons, activities and/or facilities in Syria.

Despite our repeated calls for cooperation and compliance with the Convention, Syria continues to disregard its international obligations, sow disinformation, and raise doubts about the OPCW's independent and impartial work. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand join many other States Parties in demanding immediate action from the Syrian Arab Republic. Syria must cooperate in good faith with the Technical Secretariat and fulfil its obligations under the Convention, the decisions of the OPCW Policy-Making Organs and relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions. Syria must fully declare and eliminate its chemical weapons programme, return to full compliance with the Convention, and cease its disinformation campaign.

We are equally troubled by the Identification and Investigation Team (IIT)'s report of ISIL's use of chemical weapons in Syria. CANZ condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, at any time, and under any circumstances. CANZ supported the decision at the 28th Session of the Conference of the States Parties to address chemical weapons use by Syria and by non-state actors.

CANZ reaffirms our strong support for the OPCW and its Syria missions, including the Declaration Assessment Teams (DAT), the Identification and Investigation Team (IIT), and the

Fact-Finding Mission (FFM). These teams have consistently delivered high-quality, scientifically rigorous and thorough reports, and have conducted their work with the highest levels of professionalism, impartiality, and integrity. We reaffirm our full confidence in the IIT's mandate and work to identify perpetrators of specific instances of chemical weapons use in Syria. As reiterated by many States Parties here today, the IIT was established in June 2018 in a manner completely consistent with international law, the Convention, its Verification Annex and Rule 69 of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the States Parties, which foresees voting if consensus is not achievable.

Canada, Australia, and New Zealand will not waver in our determination to call out Syria on its non-compliance. We urge Syria to pursue good faith cooperation with the Technical Secretariat and comply with its international obligations so we can close this agenda item once and for all. As reflected in the OPCW Ieper Declaration, we reiterate our strong conviction that perpetrators should be held accountable. There can be no impunity for those that carry out chemical weapons attacks.

Thank you, Chair.