

Statement by Iceland
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Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

I would like to start by congratulating Ambassador Almir Šahović of Bosnia and Herzegovina on his election as the Chairperson of the 29th Conference of States Parties and assuring him of our full support in steering the work of the Conference. We similarly pay tribute to the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Suljuk Mustansar Tarar of Pakistan.

Let me also take the opportunity to commend the effective leadership of OPCW Director-General Fernando Arias and reiterate our full confidence in the professionalism, impartiality and expertise of the Technical Secretariat.

Mr. Chair,

Despite the milestone that was reached last year, with the verified destruction of the last declared stockpiles of chemical weapons, our work is clearly not done. Chemical weapons continue to pose a grave threat to global security. We must remain steadfast in preserving the CWC and defending the norm against the use of chemical weapons.

Iceland reaffirms that the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances is unacceptable and contrary to international law. We also reiterate that there can be no impunity for chemical weapons use.

As Russia's unprovoked and unlawful war of aggression against Ukraine continues, we condemn Russian use of riot control agents as a method of warfare, explicitly prohibited by the Convention. We note with deep concern the findings of the report S/2338/2024 issued on 18 November 2024 by the Technical Secretariat, which confirms the presence of a riot control agent in samples collected in Ukraine. We are also alarmed by the alleged use by Russia of the choking agent chloropicrin. Despite legitimate international concerns, Russia has failed to provide a plausible explanation for its use of RCAs, as required under Article IX of the Convention, and the international community still awaits a credible response from Russia on the attempted assassination of Mr. Alexei Navalny with a chemical nerve agent in 2020. We reiterate our condemnation of Russia's illegal war of aggression and deplore its relentless disinformation campaign. Iceland continues to stand firm in its support for Ukraine.

Another State Party to the Convention, the Syrian Arab Republic, remains in breach of its commitments, as it keeps obstructing the OPCW's efforts to investigate chemical weapons

use on its territory. We urge Syria to fully comply with its obligations under the CWC and cooperate effectively with the OPCW to resolve outstanding issues.

As we face increasing threats to global peace and security, Iceland expresses grave concerns about the humanitarian consequences of armed conflict and condemns all violations of international law, including international humanitarian law. We remain deeply concerned about the situation in the Middle East and repeat our call for an end to hostilities.

Mr. Chair,

In this challenging security environment, we must also keep up with rapidly developing technologies that pose both threats and opportunities for the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, in particular AI. We welcome the Director-General's emphasis on addressing the impacts of emerging technologies, to ensure the continued effectiveness of the Convention.

Iceland fully supports the OPCW Draft Revised Programme and Budget for 2025. We laud the commitment of the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat towards a more diverse and inclusive organisation, and we encourage further steps to promote gender equality and mainstream gender perspectives in its work.

Iceland welcomes the participation of representatives from civil society at this Conference of States Parties. We recognize that NGOs play a key role in our common efforts towards a world free from chemical weapons and stress the importance of the OPCW remaining true to its values of openness and transparency.

I thank you Mr. Chair and kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document of the Twenty-Ninth Session of the Conference of the States Parties and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.