



**NEW ZEALAND
STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SUSANNAH GORDON
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW ZEALAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE 107th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa [greetings, greetings, greetings to you all].

Ambassador Terran-Parral, New Zealand thanks you for your continued leadership as Chairperson. Director General Arias, you can count on New Zealand's continued support.

Chair, I am honoured to address you today for the second time as an Executive Council member. New Zealand places the utmost importance on ensuring we live in a world free of chemical weapons and are here today to play our part in protecting that principle. We call on all States Parties to do the same. As a Council, we can be proud that the Chemical Weapons Convention is recognised as the world's most successful disarmament treaty. Let's ensure that remains the case.

As we look around today, the threat to global security and stability is apparent. We are deeply troubled by the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza, and the escalation of conflict within the region. We also note with concern recent reports alleging the use of missiles containing toxic gas in Sudan. We cannot turn a blind eye to the human suffering these crises cause.

We implore the Technical Secretariat to remain vigilant about any allegations of chemical weapon use, and where allegations arise, to take appropriate action. It is our job as States Parties to empower the Technical Secretariat to deliver on this responsibility.

Chair, it is a horrifying fact that the reemergence of chemical weapons use is no longer confined to our fears and imagination. It is real. We are growing tired of asking the same questions of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding their chemical weapons declaration. On this point we must be clear: Syria's declaration remains inaccurate, incomplete, and in recent months these inconsistencies have in fact grown in number and severity.

Chair, as we address you today, we also address a fellow state party, Russia, which continues to wage an illegal war of aggression on its neighbour. New Zealand unequivocally condemns Russia's blatant disregard of its international obligations. Russia must answer

to accusations of chemical weapon use, without delay. Russia has demonstrated a willingness to invest heavily in the creation of false counternarratives and unfounded accusations, but has yet to show any responsibility, transparency, or humanity.

Chair, as the world evolves and innovates, it is important that as an organisation we do so as well. The addition of emerging technologies to our agenda is a welcome development. The threats, challenges and opportunities presented by technology is something we struggle to comprehend. More must be done to advance our understanding and to help states parties and the technical secretariat adapt in response.

New Zealand will continue to advocate for an OPCW that is representative and inclusive. We welcome the voices of smaller states, of women, of countries less represented, and of civil society. These perspectives help build a rich, diverse organisation with resilience and durability.

We will also continue to advocate for a Technical Secretariat that is resourced to do the job we have asked of it. In that regard, it is our expectation that States Parties will agree the update to the Programme and Budget by consensus.

In such challenging times, it is more important than ever to uphold our obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and work towards a world free of chemical weapons. We must work past our differences for the sake of peace, and for the security and prosperity of all our people.

Chair, let me finish with a statement in our indigenous language Te Reo Māori:

“He aha te mea nui o te ao?
Māku e kī atu, he tangata, he tangata, he tangata”

What is the most important thing in this world?
It is people, it is people, it is people.

Ngā mihi [thank you].

We kindly request that this statement be considered an official-series document of the 107th Session of the Executive Council and made available on Catalyst and the OPCW's public website.