

TÜRKİYE: STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SELÇUK ÜNAL, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE TO THE OPCW AT THE 107th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL UNDER AGENDA ITEM 5 – GENERAL DEBATE

(The Hague, 8-11 October 2024)

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Director-General,
Distinguished Delegates,

We thank the Chairman of the Council, H.E. Ambassador Andrés Terán Parral, Permanent Representative of Ecuador.

We also commend the Director-General, H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias for his leadership of the Secretariat.

We reiterate Türkiye's full support to the OPCW in the work it carries out to achieve full and effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, including the destruction of chemical weapons, preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons, supporting national implementation and furthering cooperation in the development of the chemical industry.

The ultimate goal can only be achieved with full compliance as well as more international cooperation.

Mr. Chairperson,

Although the destruction of all declared chemical weapons from the stockpiles in 2023 marked a milestone, the threat of use of chemical weapons poses a significant threat to international peace and security.

We believe ensuring universality of the Convention will help preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons. Our collective efforts should be intensified towards assuring accountability through investigations and established mechanisms.

Chemical terrorism remains a concern. We should be vigilant against this challenge and take necessary measures. We emphasize the importance of cooperation to this end. In this respect, we are cognizant of the importance of the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism chaired by H.E. Vusimuzi Philemon Madonsela, Permanent Representative of South Africa. We attended the Working Group's fruitful table-top exercise in July this year for the first time and will contribute to it to prepare and finalize the Action Plan.

Türkiye acknowledges the significance of emerging technologies in tackling such threats. The Organization must keep itself at the forefront of scientific and technological advancements. Challenges and opportunities posed by Artificial Intelligence in chemical disarmament and non-proliferation should be examined thoroughly. In this regard, we welcome "the Global Conference on the Role of Artificial Intelligence in Advancing the Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention" to be held later this month in Rabat, Morocco.

AFAD, Türkiye's disaster agency, is organizing the III. International CBRN Congress on 20-22 November 2024 in Ankara, Türkiye. I am pleased to inform that OPCW will be represented at the Congress as well as other international organizations.

Mr. Chairperson,

Türkiye's counter-terrorism operations continue against DEASH, the PKK, and its Syria extension PYD/YPG. We recall the attack by PKK affiliates to this building on 3 December 2021. We note the conviction of 4 intruders with prison sentences by the competent Dutch court and are following the process.

We hereby would like to draw the Council's attention to the fact that terrorist organizations such as the PKK continue to seek ways to penetrate into this Organization by using procedural gaps, disguised as NGOs. The Technical Secretariat should be vigilant against such attempts and take the notifications from the States Parties seriously.

Türkiye supports the work of the Syria missions of the OPCW and has always highlighted the importance of accountability and prevention of impunity of chemical weapons use. We regret that there are still grave gaps and inconsistencies in Syria's declarations of chemical weapons. Recent findings of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) are an indication of this and continue to serve as a source of concern. We extend our support to establish the facts on the allegations of chemical weapons use and the perpetrators.

Mr. Chairperson,

We support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Since the outset of the war, we have been consistent in our view that a legitimate and just peace depends on diplomacy. In addition to our past and present diplomatic efforts, Türkiye is supporting the current reconstruction efforts and leading the Food Security Working Group.

Türkiye reiterates its full support and cooperation to the full implementation of the Convention. Taking this opportunity, I would like to express our thanks to be part of the OPCW's Designated Laboratories as our Chemical Warfare Agents Diagnosis and Verification Laboratory (NPHRL) was designated for the analysis of authentic environmental samples. Our laboratories continue to participate in the Organization's official proficiency tests.

I kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document of this session

Thank you.