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KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
AT THE SEVENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Excellency, the Director-General,
Excellencies, Heads of Delegation,

At the outset, it is my pleasure to extend my thanks to the Chairperson for his successful efforts and to express our full confidence that he will steer this session to a successful conclusion. I also thank the Director-General of the OPCW, his aides and the Technical Secretariat staff members for their great efforts to develop this Organisation and for its detailed reports.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reaffirms the importance of implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention, based on its policy aiming at the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction under strict and effective international control, and in accordance with paragraph 1 of the preamble of the Convention.

The commitment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Convention and its interest in its implementation at the national and international levels is an extension of its policy aiming at making an effective contribution to efforts made for the prohibition and non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction, with a view to making the Middle East region free of these lethal weapons. On many occasions, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has called upon the international community to provide the necessary support to achieve this objective, which we believe is a legitimate right of the peoples in the region and a key pillar for its security and stability.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is fully convinced that the failure to complete the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles is a source of concern to all. The completion of destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles by possessor States is one of the key objectives of the Convention, for the purpose of promoting international peace and security, and hopes that the possessor States will meet their obligations as early as possible in accordance with the measures stipulated for in the decision of the Conference of the States Parties at its Sixteenth Session. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calls once again upon the States that still possess chemical weapons to intensify their efforts to dispose thereof according to the specified deadlines and pursuant to the decisions of the Executive Council of the OPCW.



The use of chemical weapons, under any circumstances, cannot be tolerated; it is reprehensible and must be denounced and condemned in the strongest terms, as it is contrary to the moral and legal standards of the international community.

The delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has viewed the report by the Director-General on the elimination of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian regime, and appreciates the enormous efforts put in by the OPCW and by the OPCW–UN Joint Mission and its team of experts operating in the field in the Syrian Arab Republic in extraordinary working conditions. I also thank Ms Sigrid Kaag and the Joint Mission team, whose task has ended, for the progress achieved in the removal and destruction of the Syrian declared chemical weapons. None of this, however, eases our serious concern over many issues, including, in the first place, the uncertainties and data inaccuracies in the Syrian declaration, as, to this date, it has not been ascertained 100% that no chemical weapons remain in the possession of the Syrian regime.

We encourage the Technical Secretariat to continue its efforts to obtain the required information from the Syrian regime. In this respect, we refer to the repeated and continuing occurrence of use of chlorine gas against the Syrian people, the most recent of which took place in September last. We welcome the findings of the second report issued on 10 September last by the Fact-Finding Mission investigating chemical weapons attacks, which mentions clearly the systematic and repeated use of these weapons from helicopters, causing thousands of victims among the Syrian people. This is strong proof that the Syrian regime used these weapons, as no one else possesses helicopters. We encourage the Mission to continue its work until the perpetrators of these barbaric, immoral and inhumane attacks are brought before international justice and punished. Also, the destruction of the remaining 12 facilities must be completed expeditiously.

The Syrian regime is required to meet its obligations immediately and without dilatory tactics, in accordance with the Executive Council decisions and the United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is making every possible effort to support the activities related to the implementation of Article VII of the Convention, including the timely submission of annual declarations and the holding of numerous workshops and training courses in coordination with the OPCW.

The Convention lays emphasis on economic and technological development and international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention. While we appreciate past efforts in this regard, we are of the view that there is a pressing need for making further efforts to achieve the requirements of Article XI of the Convention, particularly with regard to the transfer of technology, equipment and expertise relevant to chemical industries not prohibited under the Convention to developing States, and the removal of barriers to such transfer put by many States. This will help strengthen international economic development for the benefit of all parties.

My delegation calls for a more robust implementation of Article X of the Convention concerning the provision of assistance and protection by the OPCW and the States that are able to do so to other States Parties, as needed and upon request.

We are fully aware of the technical nature of the work of our Organisation, the limitations of its mandate, its tasks and responsibilities. We are of the view that this role of the OPCW and the effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention by the States Parties are an effective contribution to the global efforts against terrorism at the international level.

Finally, I request that this statement be circulated as one of the official documents of the Seventy-Seventh Session of the Executive Council and posted on the official website of the OPCW.

I thank you for your kind attention.

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