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POLAND

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MARCIN CZEPELAK
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES
PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

At the outset I would like to congratulate H.E Ambassador Krassimir Kostov of Bulgaria on taking the function as Chairperson of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. Excellency, you can count on engagement and support of this delegation in the forthcoming days.

I would like to start with recalling the recent meeting of the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda, with the Director-General at the end of October. Summing up the visit at the OPCW the President made the following remarks: “I wish to congratulate the Director-General and the OPCW staff on their commitment and dedication (...). Poland will continue to support strongly the OPCW and the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention”. Aligning with the EU statement, this is a clear strategic guidance for three specific points I would like to make right now.

First and foremost, one year after the Review Conference there is a strong need to continue and to intensify our efforts to enhance the OPCW credibility and the integrity of the Chemical Weapons Convention, in particular in the context of repetitive use of chemical weapons around the world. For that very reason, Poland supports the ongoing implementation of the special comprehensive conference decision of June 2018. We welcome operationalisation of the Investigation and Identification Team that shall present first conclusions of its works in the forthcoming months. We recognise the necessity to continue the OPCW efforts to clarify gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies related to the Syrian chemical weapons programme. All these remain indispensable to protect the Convention today and in the future.

Second, this Conference plays an important role for the future of the Organisation, in the short and in long term. Our discussions this week, and decisions to be made, shall ensure the OPCW functioning and adaptation to challenges and threats emerging from the security environment.



Third, the draft programme and budget for 2020 provides for effective and balanced framework for all spectrums of the OPCW activities, critical to the implementation of all pillars of the Convention.

The debate on updating of the Schedule 1 of the Annex on Chemicals to the Chemical Weapons Convention, for the first time in the history, illustrates we are far from fulfilling the OPCW mandate. On a positive side, however, it shall confirm the OPCW members stand united, willing and ready to face challenges in the future.

This session of the Conference of the States Parties should also move forward considerations on the OPCW role as a platform for consultations and collaboration on issues related to scope and objective of the Convention. This is related to central nervous system-acting chemicals. This regards the issue of sea dumped chemical weapons, which Poland, with nine States Parties, namely Bulgaria, Colombia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia, Mexico, Romania and Ukraine, addressed broadly during the Review Conference. A thematic side event organised today—by Poland and Lithuania together—will hopefully stimulate further debate in this regard.

Last but not least, we need to keep the momentum for developing the Centre for Chemistry and Technology. It is a key vehicle for the OPCW to deliver upon even more demanding requirements related to verification and capacity building of States Parties. Poland remains a proponent of this flagship initiative, politically and financially, and is looking forward to the timely establishing of the centre as well as close bilateral cooperation in the future.

In conclusion Mr Chairperson, bearing in mind all these complex issues, I am honoured to inform this distinguished body that Poland, similarly to previous years, presented to the United Nations General Assembly draft resolution on the implementation of the Convention. As you may recall, for years the resolution has been contributing to international peace and security. It has been enhancing the chemical non-proliferation regime based upon the Convention and its implementing body, the OPCW. The adoption of the resolution by the United Nations General Assembly First Committee in November—again with enormous support of Member States—indicates that bridges can be built around the OPCW fundamental mission despite existing different views on specific issues. This constitutes an important message on the eve of the debate during this Conference.

Thank you.

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