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THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

**STATEMENT OF THE DELEGATION OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA TO
THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS AT
THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Heads of delegation,

At the outset, I am pleased to congratulate H.E. Mr Sa'ad Al-Ali, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq, on his election as Chairperson of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties and to express to him, on behalf of my delegation, our full confidence in his ability to steer the work of this Session. We assure him of our cooperation in every respect for the success of this Session. I am also pleased to congratulate the elected members of the Bureau and wish them all success. I should not fail to express our appreciation to H.E. Mr Peter Goosen, Ambassador of South Africa, for his efforts during his chairmanship of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference.

My delegation also associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the States Parties that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement and China. It joins those who already expressed thanks and appreciation to H.E. Mr Ahmet Üzümcü., the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons ("OPCW") for the efforts he made in a professional, wise and able manner during the past years. Again, in this context, my delegation has supported the reappointment of Ambassador Üzümcü as Director-General of the OPCW for a second term. We are also pleased, on this occasion, to congratulate the OPCW on winning the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize, which we see as a recognition by the international community of the OPCW's vital role in promoting international security and peace.

In line with my country's policy aiming at the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction under a strict and effective international control in accordance with the first paragraph of the preamble to the Convention, my country emphasises the importance of the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention ("the Convention"). My country's commitment to the Convention, and its interest in its implementation at the national and international levels, reflect its policy aiming at effectively contributing to the efforts made for the prohibition and non-proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction, since the existence of such weapons poses a threat to international peace and security. My country has therefore paid careful attention to the efforts for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction at the regional level, with a view to making the Middle East a zone free of these lethal weapons. My



country has called upon the international community on several occasions to provide the necessary support for achieving this objective, which in our view is the legitimate right of the people of the region, and will be a major support for the region's security and stability. In this respect my delegation expresses, once again, its regret at the deferral of the international conference for making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, which was scheduled to be held in Helsinki. We have been, and are still, attaching great importance to convening this conference in order to advance the peace process and promote security and stability in the Middle East. We hope that concerted international efforts will enable this conference to be convened, with the participation of all countries concerned, as it will be a constructive and necessary step toward achieving security and stability in the Middle East.

My delegation strongly believes that the non-completion of the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles is a source of concern for all. Completion of destruction by possessor States of their stockpiles of these weapons is one of the main objectives of the Convention, which aims at strengthening international peace and security. We hope that the possessor States concerned will fulfil their obligations as early as possible, in accordance with the measures set forth in the decision of the Conference of the States Parties at its Sixteenth Session. We renew our call for States still possessing chemical weapons to intensify their efforts to dispose of these weapons within the deadlines already specified, and in line with the decisions of the Executive Council of the OPCW.

The completion of destruction as soon as possible will be a turning point in the history of the OPCW and will ultimately be in the interest of everyone. We firmly believe that the OPCW cannot move forward toward wider horizons with regard to its future priorities without actually finalising the complete destruction of those stockpiles. In this connection, my delegation would like to commend the important role being played by the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW on the verification of destruction. We call on all concerned to support and strengthen this role to enable the Technical Secretariat to perform its tasks as required.

What has been accomplished under the Convention since the adoption of the action plan on the universality of the Convention in October 2003 is commendable. Perhaps it is a source of relief that 190 countries have acceded to its membership, which confirms that it enjoys widespread international respect and considerable support for its noble objectives of protecting humanity against the use of chemical weapons or against the threat of their use. We renew our call for those countries which remain outside the Convention to accede to it as soon as possible.

In this context, my delegation reiterates that the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances cannot be tolerated. It is reprehensible and must be denounced and condemned in the strongest terms, for it violates the ethical and legal standards of the international community. My country has expressed, at all levels and through the OPCW its deep outrage at and strong condemnation of the use of internationally prohibited weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, which killed hundreds of innocent people. We were deeply saddened by the reluctance of the international community to assume its responsibilities and take the necessary action to stop the fierce killing machine of the Syrian regime, which claimed the lives of more than one hundred thousand Syrians as well as the displacement of three million Syrians as refugees, even after what has been disclosed on the ground and revealed in the United Nations report on the investigation of chemical weapons use in Syria.

We were hoping that the latest international action, in the aftermath of those terrifying events, would lead to a firm international response that would deter this regime from perpetrating yet further crimes, and address the Syrian issue from a holistic perspective not limited to chemical weapons.

We reiterate that we are aware of the technical nature of the work of OPCW, as well as the limits of its mandate and the tasks and responsibilities assigned to it. Yet, our ethical responsibility requires us to point out and recall on every occasion that the sincere efforts we have already made and those we will be making in the future within the OPCW on the issue of Syrian chemical weapons should remain only part of larger efforts. The Syrian crisis cannot, ethically and legally, be reduced to the repercussions of the crime of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, or to the accession by the Syrian Arab Republic to the Convention. My delegation stresses that Syria's accession to the Convention imposes upon it legal obligations which, we emphasise must be observed and complied with.

In this regard, my delegation supports the decisions taken by the Executive Council at its Thirty-Third Meeting on 27 September 2013 and at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting on 15 November 2013, on the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons. We stress the need for compliance with the timelines specified in the Executive Council's decision on the elimination of these weapons by the middle of next year.

Mr Chairperson,
Distinguished colleagues,

It is known that, in addition to its main role in the protection against chemical weapons, the Convention affirms the importance of fostering international cooperation in the use of chemicals for purposes that are not prohibited thereunder, and in accordance with the requirements of Article XI thereof. While we appreciate past efforts in this respect, we are of the view that further efforts need to be made urgently to achieve the requirements of Article XI of the Convention, particularly with regard to transfer of technology, equipment and expertise related to chemical industries not prohibited under the Convention to developing countries and removing barriers put up by many industrially developed countries in this respect. This will help strengthen international economic development and bring about benefits for all parties, especially under the global economic crisis. Tackling this crisis and mitigating its impact, especially in developing countries requires without doubt that international cooperation be promoted in different areas.

Finally, I wish that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

I thank you for your kind attention.

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