



Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

Provisional

9519th meeting

Friday, 22 December 2023, 10 a.m.

New York

President: Mr. De La Gasca/Mr. Montalvo Sosa. (Ecuador)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Spasse
Brazil.	Mr. França Danese
China	Mr. Sun Zhiqiang
France	Mrs. Paolini
Gabon	Ms. Bouanga Ayouné
Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
Japan	Mr. Iriya
Malta	Ms. Gatt
Mozambique	Mr. Irachande Gouveia
Russian Federation.	Mr. Polyanskiy
Switzerland	Mr. Carpenter
United Arab Emirates	Ms. Alameri
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Phipps
United States of America.	Mr. Kelley

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 27 November 2023 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2023/920)

Letter dated 27 October 2023 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2023/926)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 27 November 2023 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2023/920)

Letter dated 27 October 2023 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2023/926)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Adedeji Ebo, Director and Deputy to the High Representative, United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2023/920, which contains the text of a letter dated 27 November 2023 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council; and document S/2023/926, which contains the text of a letter dated 27 October 2023 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ebo.

Mr. Ebo: I thank Security Council members for the opportunity to brief the Council once again on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) on the elimination of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic. I am conducting this briefing on behalf of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, who is currently away from the office.

Since the most recent consideration of this matter by the Council (see S/PV.9411), and consistent with established practice, the Office for Disarmament Affairs has been in regular contact with its counterparts in the

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Technical Secretariat on activities related to resolution 2118 (2013).

Since the Council's previous meeting on this matter, the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) has continued its efforts to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration and subsequent declarations submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic. I am very pleased to report that, after a gap of more than two and a half years, the twenty-fifth round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian National Authority took place from 30 October to 5 November.

I have been informed that all DAT experts, as deemed required by the OPCW Technical Secretariat, were able to deploy to Damascus for the consultations. I have been further informed that, during that period of consultations, the DAT conducted daily technical meetings, revisited the status of all outstanding issues and discussed their means of resolution. Following the consultations, the Syrian Arab Republic provided, via note verbale, explanations of the results of analysis of samples collected by the DAT from two sites during the limited in-country activities, which took place in April. I understand that the OPCW Technical Secretariat is in the process of translating those explanations, which will be followed by their analysis by the DAT and the outcomes reported by the Technical Secretariat in due course.

It is my sincere hope that that renewed spirit of cooperation can be maintained, so that all outstanding issues regarding the initial and subsequent declarations submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic can be resolved. That includes the complete declaration of activities at the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) and the declaration of quantities of nerve agents produced at one chemical weapons production facility that was declared by the Syrian Arab Republic as never having been used to produce chemical weapons.

With regard to the inspections of the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the SSRC, I have been advised that the OPCW Technical Secretariat conducted the next round of inspections in December — the tenth such round. The outcome of that round of inspections will be reported on by the Technical Secretariat in due course. However, as of the date of this month's report, the Syrian Arab Republic has yet to provide sufficient technical information or explanations that would enable the OPCW Technical Secretariat to close the issue

related to the detection of a Schedule 2 chemical at the Barzah facilities of the SSRC in November 2018.

The OPCW Technical Secretariat also continued its engagement with the Syrian National Authority on the matter related to the observation, during the ninth round of inspections, of a number of boxes containing a chemical of a dual-use nature, stored in large quantities at the Barzah facility's chemical storage warehouse. Through a note verbale dated 21 August, the Syrian Arab Republic provided some information previously requested by the Technical Secretariat. Furthermore, through its note verbale dated 12 October, the Syrian Arab Republic informed the Secretariat that additional inquiries would be discussed with the relevant SSRC staff during the inspections. The OPCW Technical Secretariat has also requested information regarding the unauthorized movement of the two cylinders related to the chemical weapon incident that took place in Douma on 7 April 2018, which were allegedly destroyed in an attack on a chemical weapons production facility. I have been informed that, as of the date of this report, the Technical Secretariat has not received a response to that request.

The OPCW Technical Secretariat remains fully committed to implementing its mandate, aimed at verifying the fulfilment of the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, decisions by OPCW policy-making organs and Security Council resolutions. However, as has been previously emphasized, full cooperation by the Syrian Arab Republic with the OPCW Technical Secretariat is essential to closing all outstanding issues. Considering the identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies that remain unresolved, at this time, the OPCW Technical Secretariat assesses that the declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic still cannot be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. I call upon the Syrian Arab Republic to continue its cooperation with the OPCW Technical Secretariat and respond with urgency to all of the Technical Secretariat's requests.

I have been advised that the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission continues to study all available information related to allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. I understand that the Fact-Finding Mission is currently preparing upcoming deployments and will report to the Executive Council on the results of its work in due course. The Investigation and Identification Team also continues its

investigations into incidents in which the Fact-Finding Mission has determined that chemical weapons were used, or likely used, in the Syrian Arab Republic and will issue further reports in due course.

With regard to the tripartite agreement concluded among the OPCW, the United Nations Office for Project Services and the Syrian Arab Republic, it is my understanding that all parties have agreed to an extension, which is currently being finalized, for a period of six months, covering the period from 1 January 2024 until, and including, 30 June 2024.

On 30 November, we observed the annual Day of Remembrance for All Victims of Chemical Warfare. On that solemn occasion, the Secretary-General called for the day to also be one of resolve — resolve to end the use of chemical weapons once and for all. As he emphasized, that means living up to the Chemical Weapons Convention's call to prevent any use of these repugnant weapons and ending impunity for all those who dare to use them, especially against civilians. The United Nations will continue to support all efforts to uphold the norm against chemical weapons and to relegate these dreadful weapons to history. As we look forward to a new year, I urge the members of the Council to again unite on this issue and show leadership in demonstrating that impunity in the use of chemical weapons will not be tolerated. The Office for Disarmament Affairs stands ready to provide whatever support and assistance it can.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Ebo for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Kelley (United States of America): I thank Deputy to the High Representative Ebo for his briefing and sustained attention on this important issue.

The United States continues to be appalled by Syria's flagrant non-compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and defiance of various Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2118 (2013). For 10 years, the United States, alongside most of the international community, has called out the Syrian authorities' repeated and ongoing violations of the Chemical Weapons Convention and resolution 2118 (2013). We have condemned Al-Assad's multiple confirmed uses of chemical weapons against his own people and his Government's failure to

fully declare and destroy its chemical weapons and production facilities.

To that end, we welcomed the note issued in September by the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which detailed the work of the Declaration Assessment Team to identify the shortcomings of Syria's initial declaration of data and its subsequent amendments. Those shortcomings include unverified quantities of chemical weapons, undeclared production facilities for chemical weapons and undeclared chemical weapons. The note concludes definitively that

“These matters give rise to continued concerns regarding the potential existence of undeclared stockpiles of chemical weapons, undeclared activities or facilities, and the possibility of the further use of chemical weapons.” (S/2213/2023, *para.* 58)

Those conclusions are stark reminders that the Al-Assad regime continues to pose a serious threat to the protection of its civilians and international peace and security as it flouts its commitments under the CWC and defies the Security Council's resolutions. That assessment comes directly from professional, impartial experts.

Protecting the global non-proliferation regime means recommitting to preventing further chemical-weapons attacks and the proliferation of chemical weapons, as well as holding the Al-Assad regime accountable. In that connection, the United States strongly welcomes the adoption on 30 November by the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention of the OPCW's decision entitled “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use and the Threat of Future Use”. The Conference decided that the continued possession and the use of chemical weapons by Syria and its failures to submit an accurate and complete declaration and to destroy all its undeclared chemical weapons and production facilities have caused serious damage to the object and purpose of the CWC.

The decision calls on States parties to take collective measures to prevent transfers of dual-use materials that could support chemical-weapons use or deployment in Syria and to support relevant national and international accountability efforts. It is the United States hope that transparency will encourage State parties to ensure that toxic chemicals and their precursors do not reach chemical-weapons programmes.

Lastly, the decision urges the General Assembly and the Security Council to take appropriate actions to address the situation and advance accountability.

All of that considered, there is no debate as to whether the Al-Assad regime has used chemical weapons. It has. There is no debate as to whether the Al-Assad regime is compliant with its obligations under the CWC. It is not. There is no debate as to whether Syria's chemical weapons programme remains a threat to international peace and security. It does. And there is no debate on the importance of the Council remaining seized of this issue. It must.

Earlier this month, 159 Member States voted in the General Assembly in support of the CWC. It is now time for the Council to carry out our responsibilities to uphold international peace and security in the face of a persistent chemical-weapons threat. The United States remains committed to working with all Council members and in other appropriate forums to ensure that Al-Assad never again terrorizes his people or the international community with chemical weapons.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Given that this is the last Security Council meeting in December — with the exception of the upcoming vote today — I would like to pay tribute to the efforts of the Ecuadorian presidency which, despite the extremely turbulent situation in the Council, has been able to decisively carry out its functions. I would also like to thank the Brazilian and Chinese presidencies of the Council in October and November, respectively, for respecting the time of Council members by not including in the programme of work meetings on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013), on which there has long been no substantive development. Our country, like a number of other colleagues, has long called for optimizing the schedule of Council meetings on the Syrian chemical file. In our view, discussing them once a quarter is more than enough. In that regard, the added value of today's meeting is also highly debatable. The United States delegation, which pushed for its inclusion in our programme of work, failed to provide arguments as to why it was necessary to include it in the programme of work.

Another report (see S/2023/926) of the Director-General Fernando Arias of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013) is not too different from the previous ones. Among the changes,

it is worth noting the reference to the twenty-fifth round of consultations between the initial Declaration Assessment Team and the Syrian Arab Republic — our Western colleagues have been criticizing Damascus for quite some time for their failure to hold it. We had no illusions, however, that that would have any effect on the tone of statements by the United States and its allies today, since old and new fabrications about the involvement of the Syrian authorities in chemical incidents in their own country are the only thing they can use to try to justify their attempts to keep this topic artificially afloat in the Council.

It is no secret that the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat have long been nothing more than an obedient weapon in the hands of a group of Western States, which now have to lay the ground for new anti-Syrian decisions. That includes the adoption at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), held in The Hague from 27 November to 1 December, of a recommendation to impose collective measures against Damascus aimed at preventing the supply to Syria of the chemicals, dual-use equipment and technologies included in the annex to document S/2006/853, of 7 November 2006. That decision cannot be described as anything other than obvious arbitrary rule. It is telling that only 65 countries of the OPCW's 194 members wanted to associate themselves with it. That is extremely indicative for understanding the crisis in the organization caused by the actions of Western countries that are gripped by anti-Syria and anti-Russian hysteria.

In their actions, they have also dealt a blow to the Charter of the United Nations. Indeed, by insisting on the adoption of collective measures in accordance with article XII of the CWC, they simply omit the fact that this article provides for the possibility of adopting collective measures exclusively in accordance with international law. And in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter, the decision to fully or partially terminate economic relations with countries is the exclusive prerogative of the Security Council. The OPCW has no such mandate. Moreover, sanctions by the Council are not imposed in order to economically strangle an ill-favoured country, as the Western neo-colonialists seem to think. Rather, they are auxiliary tool for achieving a specific aim — the maintenance of international peace and security. The decision of the Conference of the States Parties does not — and

cannot — serve that aim. What is this other than another attempt to replace the norms of international law with certain rules that are tailored to a small group of States and convenient only for them?

Syria's foes in the OPCW are proposing to use the mechanism of the harshest sanctions, ignoring the fact that many of the substances from the annex to the United Nations document are actively used in agriculture and medicine. A ban on their supply would lead to further deterioration of the already dire humanitarian situation in Syria. Moreover, the decision stipulates the possibility of CWC States parties introducing any other restrictions against Syria in that area. The OPCW Director-General thus essentially has been given the power in the future to determine, at his own discretion, those countries that would allegedly be in violation of the CWC. In essence, Western countries have acquired yet another anti-Syrian toy that they will probably start playing with at today's meeting. The statement of the United States representative is a confirmation of that.

In that regard, I would like to underscore that insinuations that Syria has preserved its chemical warfare capacities are believed by only a limited number of anti-Syrian States. As is well known, Damascus fully complied with its obligations under resolution 2118 (2013) to eliminate its chemical warfare programme. That was done under the strict control of the OPCW Technical Secretariat and with unprecedented assistance from States parties, as confirmed in 2016 in documents of the OPCW Executive Council and the Conference of the States Parties to the CWC. Everything else is simply opportunistic political speculation.

Given the overall deep crisis in the OPCW, a consequence of its blatant politicization, it was no surprise that during the OPCW Conference of the States Parties a show was put on with roles assigned in advance, aimed at hindering the re-election of Russia to the Executive Council. I am not going to get into details. I will simply say that such actions grossly trample on the CWC's consensus procedure for advancing candidacies, and those who organized this spectacle have taken a further step towards the definitive destruction of this once authoritative organization.

We could provide many more unflattering facts for the OPCW today and mention the activities of the illegitimate Investigation and Identification Team. However, I will save the Council's time, as well as my own, since first, I do not want to repeat things that are

obvious and secondly, I do not see any point in wasting my breath in front of those who have long been putting together their anti-Syrian and anti-Russian statements and who are intent on continuing their shameful and mendacious show, which is harmful to the OPCW. That will mean nothing more than the assertions of our American colleagues that no one is doing more than they are to help the residents of Gaza, which is being destroyed by Israel with their assistance and silent consent. Instead, I will take advantage of the fact that this is probably the last open meeting of the Security Council this year, notwithstanding the vote, to thank Albania, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana and the United Arab Emirates, who are leaving the Council, and to welcome Algeria, Guyana, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia and Sierra Leone, who are joining the Council for two years.

Mr. Iriya (Japan): First, I would like to thank Ecuador for convening today's briefing, as the Council has failed to discuss this important file since our last discussions in September (see S/PV.9411). My appreciation also goes to the Deputy to the High Representative, Mr. Ebo, for his briefing.

The use of chemical weapons should never be tolerated anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstance. It is our shared responsibility to hold accountable those who have used chemical weapons and bring justice to the victims. No Council member should provide shelter to those responsible for committing brutal and inhumane acts against their own people.

Japan commends the professional, impartial and independent work conducted by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We strongly oppose any attempts to undermine their invaluable work. The use of chemical weapons by Syria remains a clear threat to international peace and security. We are gravely concerned about the continuing discrepancies, gaps and inconsistencies in Syria's initial and subsequent declarations, as once again confirmed by the latest monthly report by the Director-General of OPCW (see S/2023/926).

On 30 November, in The Hague, the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention made its position clear by deciding that the continued possession and use of chemical weapons by Syria and its failure to destroy all of its undeclared chemical weapons and production facilities have caused serious damage to the object and purpose of the Convention. Syria must return to full compliance with its obligations

under the Chemical Weapons Convention and resolution 2118 (2013).

We take note of the outcome of the recent twenty-fifth round of consultations between the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team and the Syrian National Authority, which was finally held in Damascus after more than two and half years since the last round of consultations. Syria must continue its engagement and cooperation in good faith with the OPCW Technical Secretariat to resolve all outstanding issues. In particular, we are seriously concerned about the newly reported presence of undeclared chemical warfare agents, which were found at two sites in Syria during the limited in-country activities conducted in April. The Syrian Arab Republic must address this concerning issue as a matter of priority.

Japan reiterates our strong support for the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat in their efforts to hold the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons accountable. We continue to urge the Syrian Government to declare and eliminate its entire chemical weapons programme to prevent the recurrence of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Japan believes the Council should remain regularly seized of this matter.

Ms. Alameri (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank Mr. Adedeji Ebo for his briefing today.

I would like to reiterate the United Arab Emirates' firm position that explicitly rejects and condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. Their use constitutes a flagrant violation of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and international law.

In the context of today's discussion, I will focus in my statement on the following points.

First, my country welcomes the convening of the twenty-fifth round of consultations in Damascus, along with the ongoing discussions between the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and Syria on all outstanding matters. Maintaining dialogue between the two sides remains crucial to making progress on that file.

Secondly, it is critical to uphold the technical nature and the consensus principle of the OPCW to ensure that files are not politicized. We underscore that the recent decision adopted during the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical

Weapons Convention is unprecedented. That decision will not contribute to the resolution of the outstanding issues and will have consequences on the already deteriorated humanitarian situation in Syria, especially in terms of the prohibition of chemicals and dual-use equipment essential for medical, pharmaceutical and other peaceful purposes. That approach will also hinder progress made by the organization and Syria in restoring confidence and finding a common practical formula.

Thirdly, as we mentioned previously, the threats of chemical terrorism cannot be overlooked, especially as Da'esh continues to launch its attacks in Syria. The threat of chemical terrorism by Da'esh poses a serious risk to the security and stability of the region, a concern supported by the recent report of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

Lastly, we express our deep concern over reports of Israel's use of white phosphorus as an incendiary weapon in Gaza and Lebanon. That weapon is internationally prohibited by the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, adopted in 1980 in Geneva. White phosphorus exposes civilians to the risk of critical and long-term injuries. The use of white phosphorus against civilians raises serious questions about compliance with international humanitarian law and should be investigated.

In conclusion, as this is the last meeting in which the United Arab Emirates is participating on this subject during its membership, I would like to once again stress the importance of achieving progress on the chemical weapons file in Syria and on all files related to resolving the Syrian crisis.

Mr. Spasse (Albania): I thank Mr. Ebo for his briefing.

Ten years ago the Syrian Arab Republic acceded to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Syria committed to cooperating with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the exercise of all its functions. Accordingly, 10 years after, Syria should have destroyed its chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities. Unfortunately, that has not been the case.

Several international reports have found that chemical weapons have been used in Syria since its accession to the Convention. The identified perpetrators should be held accountable. According to the note of the OPCW Technical Secretariat dated 23 September 2023, Syria continues to refuse to fully cooperate with the international community regarding the chemical weapons programme. There are several gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the declarations of the Syrian national authorities. Twenty out of 24 outstanding issues raised by the Technical Secretariat remain unresolved. The substance of the unresolved outstanding issues involves unverified quantities of chemical weapons, the undeclared production of chemical weapons and undeclared chemical weapons, including chlorine and sarin, used in chemical attacks.

All of that gives us serious concerns regarding the potential existence of undeclared stockpiles of chemical weapons, activities and facilities. We welcome the twenty-fifth round of consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) and the Syrian National Authority, which took place in Damascus at the beginning of November, as confirmed by the 122nd monthly report of the Director-General of OPCW. We remain concerned about the results of the analysis of samples collected by the DAT on two sites during the limited in-country activities in April this year. The results revealed the presence at two sites of indications of several chemical warfare agents that had not been declared.

We call on Syria to provide all relevant information regarding the chemical weapons and related activities. We fully support the work of the OPCW, United Nations agencies and other international organizations in that regard. We believe that the tripartite agreement concluded among the OPCW, the United Nations Office for Project Services and the Syrian Arab Republic should be further extended. It is time for Syria to understand that it must fully declare and destroy its chemical weapons programmes in a transparent and verifiable manner. It should fully cooperate with the OPCW in compliance with resolution 2118 (2013).

As this is the last meeting in which Albania will take the floor on this file, we stress the importance for the Security Council to take responsibility in implementing its resolutions, and in that context, these regular meetings remain a necessity. In concluding, allow me, Mr. President, to express Albania's appreciation for the

way Ecuador has presided over the complicated work of the Security Council during this month of December..

Mr. Sun Zhiqiang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Ebo, Deputy to the High Representative, for his briefing.

We firmly oppose the use of chemical weapons by anybody, under any circumstances and for any purpose, and we hope that our world will be free of chemical weapons as soon as possible. China has always called for the resolution of all outstanding issues on Syria's initial declaration of chemical weapons through dialogue and consultation.

We welcome the holding of the twenty-fifth round of technical consultations between the Syrian Government and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) early last month. We encourage the Syrian Government and the Technical Secretariat to strengthen communication and work together, meet each other halfway on the basis of mutual respect and cooperation and on equal footing, with a view to jointly resolving the outstanding issues at an early date. External parties must effectively maintain the positive momentum and cooperation between the two sides.

The OPCW's investigation and the pursuit of accountability for the alleged use of chemical weapons should be conducted in strict compliance with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the relevant verification annexes in order to ensure procedural compliance, reliable evidence and credible conclusions. We hope that the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat will make tangible efforts to safeguard the technical attributes of the OPCW.

China has always maintained that the Council should reduce the frequency of its deliberations on this issue in order to effectively save resources and increase efficiency. We look forward to the members of the Council reaching a formal arrangement in that regard as soon as possible.

Mr. Phipps (United Kingdom): In this last open briefing on the agenda for this month, let me join others in congratulating you, Mr. President, for the manner in which you and your team have conducted your presidency this month. I would also like to thank Director Ebo, as always, for his detailed briefing and to express gratitude to the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

(OPCW) for his 122nd report and to the OPCW more broadly for its ongoing and vital work to uphold the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Contrary to the expectations of the representative of the Russian delegation, the United Kingdom welcomes the twenty-fifth round of consultations between the OPCW and Syria, which took place last month in Damascus. We commend the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team for their hard work to reconcile discrepancies in Syria's declaration. However, it is nonetheless important that we are clear — that limited concession does not redress Syria's long-standing non-compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Syrian regime has consistently blocked the OPCW's work, refusing visas and insisting on unacceptable conditions.

The Declaration Assessment Team is of course entitled to full and unfettered access to inspect any and all sites in Syria, not just the limited in-country activities that have been conducted this year. And as Director Ebo briefed, sampling by the Declaration Assessment Team at two sites in April indicated further issues with Syria's declaration of its chemical weapons holdings. Not only does that reduce what little faith we had in Syria's declaration, but it clearly demonstrates Syria's continuing disregard for the Chemical Weapons Convention and the principles that nearly all of us around this table uphold.

As we have said many times before, the outstanding issues on Syria's chemical weapons declaration are not academic. They include the whereabouts of hundreds of tons of chemical weapons agents and thousands of munitions. Syria's chemical weapons remain a threat to international peace and security until its chemical weapons programme has been fully and verifiably destroyed.

We therefore welcome the decision in November of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. That new decision will strengthen cooperation among States parties to address the global threat from the Syrian regime's non-compliance, in particular by taking concrete steps to stop the transfer of toxic chemicals and the materials needed to produce chemical weapons from entering Syria until it fully complies with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The lack of progress on this file is not a reason to reduce our attention on it. On the contrary, it is the lack of progress that requires the Council to remain

seized of the matter. Ten years on from its adoption, the provisions of resolution 2118 (2013) have not been met. The outstanding issues on Syria's declaration are unresolved. And independent international investigations have found the Syrian regime responsible for at least nine chemical weapons attacks against its own people. We owe it to the thousands of victims of chemical weapons attacks in Syria and elsewhere to continue our work until Syria's chemical weapons no longer present a threat to international peace and security.

Mr. Carpenter (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would also like to thank Mr. Adedeji Ebo, Director and Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, for his briefing.

We take note of the fact that the twenty-fifth round of consultations between the Declarations Assessment Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the Syrian authorities took place in Damascus in November, for the first time since April 2021. It is indeed Syria's obligation to provide immediate and unhindered access to all OPCW teams, including for inspections of all sites. We therefore hope that those consultations will mark a step towards full cooperation between Syria and the OPCW.

In particular, Syria has yet to provide answers to the 20 points left unresolved in its initial declaration. Those answers are one of the conditions for Syria to regain its rights and privileges under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We are concerned in particular by the OPCW's reports on the analysis of samples taken during limited in-country activities in April 2023. They revealed the presence of indicators of several chemical warfare agents that were not declared at two sites. While we can positively note that the consultations in November resulted in a written exchange on the presence of those undeclared chemical warfare agents, we look forward to hearing about the analyses carried out on the subject in the next report.

We condemn the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances. Over the past 10 years, the obligations under the Convention have been repeatedly violated, and some 25 chemical attacks documented by the United Nations and the OPCW have taken place in Syria. The missions and mechanisms of those organizations have concluded that there are reasonable grounds to believe that nine of those attacks

are attributable to the Syrian Government. Switzerland would like to reaffirm once again its full confidence in the OPCW and all its missions.

Since the adoption of resolution 2118 (2013), the regular meetings of the Council have served to reiterate a central issue: preventing the development, production, stockpiling, retention, transfer and use of chemical weapons and ensuring their destruction.

Those who use chemical weapons in Syria, as elsewhere, must be brought to justice; their impunity is unacceptable. In that respect, we welcome the formal cooperation between the OPCW and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. It is an essential component in the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013), ensuring respect for international law and combating impunity.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): I have the honour to deliver this joint statement on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council (A3).

We thank Mr. Adedeji Ebo, Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his briefing and welcome the participation of the representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Türkiye in this meeting.

We welcome the 122nd monthly report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) (see S/2023/920) and the submission of the 119th report of the Syrian Arab Republic.

At the outset, the A3 reiterates its unwavering commitment to the principles and norms established against the use of chemical weapons and reaffirms its support for all efforts aimed at eliminating their production, storage or use. We also renew our steadfast support for the work of the OPCW as the main body responsible for ensuring the complete and verified elimination of the chemical weapons programme in Syria.

As we await the outcome of the twenty-fifth round of consultations held between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Declaration Assessment Team in early November 2023, it is our hope that a new chapter of constructive cooperation between the two sides has been opened to help foster the needed momentum and

speed up the process towards addressing all outstanding issues in line with resolution 2118 (2013).

The A3 urges the two sides to use the recent encouraging development as new impetus in reversing the slow pace of progress in order to confirm without further delay the complete and verifiable elimination of all of Syria's chemical weapons programme. We urge the two sides to reconcile their differences in a mutual and timely manner to move the processes forward.

We also encourage the Syrian Arab Republic to fulfil its obligations in line with resolution 2118 (2013) and the Chemical Weapons Convention. Considering the multiplicity of crises facing the Syrian Arab Republic, we believe that the prompt and satisfactory resolution of the country's chemical weapons programme can help redirect international efforts towards the resolution of the political and humanitarian problems confronting the Syrian people.

The grave and serious threat that chemical weapons pose to international peace and security means that we all, the international community, must live up to our responsibility to protect humankind from those weapons. We cannot do that without our common commitment to the promotion of strict adherence of the international instruments that prohibit the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. In that regard, as the A3, and with our Permanent Representation on the Council, we will continue to support the efforts by the OPCW to resolve professionally the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

We urge all stakeholders to show their full commitment in resolving all outstanding issues to remove lingering doubts over the production and possible use of chemical weapons in Syria. We underscore the need for a definite closure of the issues pertaining to the Syrian chemical weapons programme and reaffirm our continued support for resolution 2118 (2013).

Since this is the last open meeting of the Security Council, we take this opportunity to congratulate Ecuador on its successful presidency.

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): Since this is the last formal meeting of the Security Council scheduled, I also join others in congratulating you, Mr. President, and all your team on the conduct of a very successful presidency for the month of December.

We thank Director Ebo for his briefing. We welcome the scheduling of today's meeting. We remain firm in our belief that the Council must continue to discuss this important issue on a regular basis, as mandated by resolution 2118 (2013).

Independent Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and joint United Nations-OPCW investigations have concluded that the Syrian regime has used chemical weapons against its own people nine times. That is unconscionable. Malta strongly condemns those attacks. The use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the legal norms and standards of the international community.

With resolution 2118 (2013), the Council unanimously established that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable. Ensuring accountability for those acts is ensuring justice. It is the right thing to do. It signals our resolve to prevent such acts from happening again. It is our duty and responsibility, as Council members, to work towards that end.

Ten years after acceding to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Syria has still has not declared or destroyed all its chemical weapons stockpiles. That is unacceptable.

The two latest reports of the OPCW (see S/2023/926 and S/2023/920) have shown an alarming development. Analyses of the samples collected by the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) during its limited in-country deployment in April revealed, "the presence of indicators of several chemical warfare agents that were not declared at two sites". (*S/2023/920, annex, para. 13*). Moreover, the Syrian Arab Republic failed to provide the Technical Secretariat with an explanation within the requested timeline and submitted the related note verbale over a month later, on 23 November. That is deeply concerning. We look forward to the translation and analysis of such explanations by the Technical Secretariat.

In September, the OPCW Technical Secretariat issued a note highlighting that the unresolved outstanding issues in Syria's initial declaration are of serious concern. It also stated that such issues could raise doubts of undeclared stockpiles and activities in the country. Regrettably, those concerns seem to have been well-founded.

We take note of the convening, without conditions, of the twenty-fifth round of consultations between the DAT and the Syrian national authorities between 30 October and 5 November. That is a positive step. At the same time, we urge the Syrian Arab Republic to continue to cooperate with the Technical Secretariat and to submit all the requested documents to close all outstanding issues with its initial declaration. As the OPCW report (see S/2023/920) indicates, the declaration still cannot be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention and resolution 2118 (2013). The lack of progress on that front is deplorable, and Syria bears complete responsibility for it.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our full support to the OPCW Technical Secretariat and its teams. They carry out their mandate independently, impartially and in accordance with international standards. The OPCW plays a crucial role in the implementation of the global prohibition of chemical weapons and in ensuring the complete elimination of all chemical weapons in Syria.

Mrs. Paolini (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Ebo for his briefing. I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Ecuador on its presidency of the Council this month.

More than 10 years have passed since Syria acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). More than 10 years later, Syria still does not respect the obligations it entered into by acceding to that instrument, nor does it comply with resolution 2118 (2013). Syria has used chemical weapons against its own population, including after joining the CWC. Independent reports from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism have documented that on nine occasions.

The use of chemical weapons, which are weapons of mass destruction, against civilian populations constitutes a war crime and a crime against humanity. Such grave acts must not go unpunished. In that regard, France will continue, together with its partners, to support work aimed at establishing the facts, identifying those responsible for the use of chemical weapons and ensuring that they are held accountable for their actions.

Furthermore, the Syrian regime is still not demonstrating the necessary transparency on the status of its chemical weapons stockpiles and manufacturing facilities. Its national declaration on the subject remains incomplete. Last October, after more than two

years of delay and obstruction from Syria, the twenty-fifth round of consultations was held between Syrian authorities and the OPCW Technical Secretariat team tasked with assessing the initial declaration.

The questions raised by that statement, however, have not been resolved. In his most recent report, released in November (see S/2023/920), the Director-General of the OPCW emphasizes that Syria's declaration still cannot be considered accurate and complete, given the requirements of the CWC and resolution 2118 (2013). We reiterate our support for the Technical Secretariat's teams and once again call on the Syrian regime to fully cooperate with them. Syria must comply with its obligations under the CWC if it wishes to regain its rights and privileges as a State party, which were suspended in 2021 owing to its repeated violations of the Convention.

In view of Syria's continued lack of cooperation with the OPCW, we welcome the decision adopted at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the States Parties to the CWC to call on States to take collective measures to prevent the transfer to Syria of toxic chemical products, their precursors and dual-use chemical manufacturing equipment.

Syria's possession and use of chemical weapons continues to pose a threat to peace and security and to the non-proliferation architecture. Those threats continue to require increased vigilance from the Council, and France will maintain its commitment on that subject with its partners.

Mr. França Danese (Brazil): I thank Mr. Ebo for his briefing, and I welcome the representatives of Syria, Iran and Türkiye to this meeting.

Today's meeting takes place after the adoption of decision C-28/DEC.12 by the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention on 30 November. The decision in question was adopted by a very contentious vote, in which the majority of States either voted against the decision or chose to abstain or to be absent. That result clearly demonstrates how the decision failed to garner broad support. It was not subjected to consultations or negotiations beforehand, nor to a prior decision by the Executive Council — a clear circumvention of its mandate. It represents another dangerous step towards the erosion of support for an organization that was once based on consensus.

Brazil abstained in the adoption of that decision owing to the conviction that it runs counter to the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and works at cross-purposes to our efforts to shore up the credibility of the organization. The result of the voting also indicates that our concern is shared by a growing number of States and merits serious reflection.

The OPCW currently faces a crisis of credibility, as evidenced by the recurrent questions raised in relation to inspection activities in Syria. We believe that those issues must be properly and unequivocally addressed by the OPCW, with a view to breaking the current cycle of counterproductive controversies and to preserving the credibility of the organization. Throughout this year, Brazil has been making concrete proposals to that end in the policymaking bodies of the OPCW, which thus far have not been heeded.

We deeply regret that, instead of addressing those issues, the decision will contribute to furthering distrust and increasing divides that run through the membership of the organization. The OPCW is an essential part of the disarmament architecture, and its credibility depends on the preservation of broad support from all of its 193 member States, as well as on the insulation of its technical activities from political interference. As is often said of judges, it is not enough to be impartial — the OPCW must also be seen to be impartial.

We reiterate that the work of the OPCW in establishing the factual truth regarding incidents of the use of chemical weapons must be carried out with unequivocal commitment to transparency, impartiality and technical rigour. Only that will provide the basis for the attribution of responsibility by the Security Council as the competent organ to deliver on that task. Repeated calls for criminal investigations or proceedings prior to attribution by the Council take us further away from, not closer to, true accountability and the resolution of the file. Enhanced cooperation between Syria and the OPCW Technical Secretariat remains our best hope for closing the Syrian chemical file and for preventing and deterring any future uses of those weapons.

Brazil reiterates once again its condemnation of the use or threat of use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone and under any circumstances. Any use of such weapons represents a serious threat to international peace and security and a hideous breach

of international law, as well as of all moral and ethical universal standards.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Ecuador.

I begin by thanking Mr. Adedeji Ebo, Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his informative briefing.

We appreciate the efforts of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to provide detailed and independent information on the complete and verifiable elimination of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Ecuador also acknowledges the determined work of the Declaration Assessment Team of the OPCW Technical Secretariat to clarify all outstanding issues related to the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic and its subsequent declarations. In that vein, we welcome the holding of the twenty-fifth round of consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team and the Syrian National Authority, held in Damascus from 30 October to 5 November. It is our firm conviction that dialogue in good faith and collaborative work are the best mechanisms to achieve positive results on that issue.

However, we are concerned about the outcome of the analysis of samples taken by the Declaration Assessment Team in April 2023, which could indicate undeclared activities at the sites of their collection. We await the Technical Secretariat's report on that incident.

We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to continue to cooperate with the OPCW and its technical teams and to remain committed to fulfilling its obligations, in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention and resolutions of the Council, including resolution 2118 (2013). As our delegation has mentioned on other occasions, any incident involving the use of chemical weapons must be addressed in full transparency and be subject to extensive investigations, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. We reiterate our rejection of the production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and emphatically condemn their use by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Dandy (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): There is no doubt that 10 years on from Syria's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is an opportunity to assess what has been genuinely and objectively achieved, without politicization. However, the hostile statements delivered today by the representatives of some Western countries paint a distorted picture of reality and the truth, blindly ignoring all forms of serious cooperation in which my country has engaged over the past 10 years with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and its technical teams, even before the Convention's entry into force. Such cooperation culminated in the successful and verified destruction of our entire chemical stockpile and production facilities.

My delegation rejects in the strongest terms the fallacies, distortions of fact and allegations in the statements made today by the representatives of some Western countries. We reaffirm that Syria has fulfilled all its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and destroyed its entire chemical stockpile and that the chemical programme has become a matter of the past and a closed issue for my country.

Following intense morally and politically unacceptable pressure from the United States, France, Germany and the United Kingdom in particular, a small minority in the Conference of the States Parties to the OPCW voted to adopt spiteful measures against Syria, which has strictly adhered to the stipulations of the Convention. That decision is part of the attempts to legitimize the inhumane unilateral coercive measures imposed by Western countries on Syria, which will exacerbate the suffering of the Syrian people, in particular at the humanitarian level. In that context, I note that the measures included in resolution 2118 (2013) contradict the provisions of article XI of the CWC, which underscores the implementation of the Convention in a way that avoids obstructing the economic and technological development of States parties and international cooperation in chemical activities for purposes not prohibited by the Convention.

The notorious resolution establishes a dangerous stage in the work of the OPCW and its future and increases polarization and politicization. Its adoption through a vote, contrary to established practice, reveals the magnitude of the damage caused to the OPCW by Western countries. The adoption of resolution 2118 (2013) raises the following question: given the blatant politicization of its technical work, is the OPCW able

to implement the mandate stipulated in the CWC, and what are the guarantees?

The problem in the OPCW today is not Syria. It is a much broader problem. The organization has been transformed into a platform to target other countries that are not marching in line with Western countries. The Syrian Arab Republic rejects that resolution and considers it to be a departure from the framework of the CWC, which regulates the work of the OPCW, specifically the measures that violate the provisions of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Syria reiterates that the resolution represents only the isolationist position of Western countries and shows that the true goal is to achieve what Western countries have been unable to achieve through acts of aggression and failed political campaigns against Syria over the past 12 years, including blatant support for terrorism and the fabrication of incidents of the use of chemical weapons.

That isolationist position came at a time when the Syrian National Authority continued to cooperate with the OPCW Technical Secretariat and achieved the following.

First, the Syrian National Authority submitted its monthly reports — Nos. 118, 119, 120 and 121 — for the past months, regarding the activities conducted in Syria.

Secondly, the Syrian National Authority facilitated the holding of the twenty-fifth round of consultations with the Declaration Assessment Team, from 1 to 5 November, as we had welcomed the holding of that round of consultations since the first day that the Technical Secretary requested to hold them. I reiterate that holding that round of consultations was in line with us welcoming the holding of the consultations since the first day we received the request to hold them. It was not a limited waiver, as described by the representative of the United Kingdom. During the round of consultations, the Syrian National Authority provided all the facilitation necessary for the team and cooperated with it to make the mission a success.

Thirdly, the Syrian National Authority agreed to extend the tripartite agreement among the Syrian Arab Republic, the OPCW's Technical Secretariat and the United Nations Office for Project Services for an additional period of six months to facilitate the tasks and activities of the OPCW in Syria.

Fourthly, the Syrian National Authority submitted all documents covering the inquiries of the OPCW's Technical Secretariat about the dual-use material that was seen by the inspection team at the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) during the ninth inspection round. It also continues discussions with SSRC employees and the Technical Secretariat to provide the necessary clarifications.

Fifthly, the Syrian Arab Republic welcomed the Technical Secretariat's team's conduct of the tenth inspection round to the SSRC from 1 to 6 December, which was the first in 2023. The Syrian National Authority has provided all the necessary facilities and information for the success of the team's mission. We look forward to issuing our final report to the team, which should reflect Syria's cooperation with the team and the facilitation provided to it.

Syria holds the Western countries accountable for the negative effects on the OPCW in the present and in the future, as a result of imposing on the organization decisions that increase division and polarization. My country calls on the Technical Secretariat to be committed to the provisions of the CWC and to conduct a comprehensive review of its approach and reports and not allow itself to be a vehicle that serves the goals of a group of countries.

The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that it has implemented all its obligations to the OPCW and underscores its categorical condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anytime, anywhere and under any circumstances.

In conclusion, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the delegation of the sisterly United Arab Emirates for its close cooperation with us and the important efforts it made during its term as a member of the Council. We are all confident that our sister Algeria, the next Arab member of the Council, will also play an honourable role.

I would also like to thank the delegations of Brazil, Gabon and Ghana for their efforts during their term as members of the Council and for maintaining positions that are consistent with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. As for the delegation of Albania, we regret its biased positions in favour of the collective West and its willingness to go along with the hostile political agenda of some Western countries against my country.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Ahmadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I thank you, Mr. President, for your effective and successful presidency for this month.

We welcome the presence of Mr. Ebo, Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, at today's briefing.

As the primary victim of the most systematic use of chemical weapons in contemporary history, the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemns any use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances. From our perspective, the only way to guarantee the prevention of the use of chemical weapons is their destruction on a global scale, as well as to put policies in place to stop their production. We insist on a complete, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and on upholding the authority of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Politicizing the Convention's implementation and using the OPCW for political ends must be avoided, since they have seriously damaging effects on the organization's authority and credibility, as well as the Convention's.

As a State party fulfilling its commitments and working with the OPCW, Syria has been the target of such attempts by specific States parties. We commend the Syrian Government for its commitment to ongoing cooperation with the OPCW, as demonstrated by its willingness to convene a high-level meeting between the Syrian Foreign Minister and the Director-General of the OPCW. As part of its continued cooperation, the Syrian National Authority has diligently submitted monthly reports for the past three months, outlining the activities conducted within Syria. Furthermore, it facilitated the twenty-fifth round of consultations for the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) from 1 to 5 November. In addition, as a practical measure, the Syrian National Authority agreed to extend the tripartite agreement between the Syrian Arab Republic, the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the United Nations Office for Project Services for an additional six months. That extension seeks to streamline and support the OPCW's tasks and activities within Syria.

Given such cooperation, Iran supports the idea of constructive dialogue between Syria and the OPCW, urging the establishment of a specific time frame to

address any remaining issues and bring the file to a final and conclusive resolution. That approach is pivotal to ensuring transparency, accountability and the satisfactory resolution of all outstanding issues.

Last but not least, we consider that repeatedly convening Security Council meetings and expressing past viewpoints, including unfounded allegations, is not helpful to the Security Council's efficiency. We urge the Security Council to make constructive efforts and expect a positive role from Council members.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Türkiye.

Mrs. Özgür (Türkiye): We thank the Ecuadorian presidency for convening this meeting after a two-month interval (see S/PV.9411), allowing for the Security Council to consider progress on the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. We also thank Director Ebo for his briefing.

Türkiye notes with great concern the latest monthly reports of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) (see S/2023/920 and S/2023/926), as well as his recent reports on the work of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT).

The use of chemical weapons has been independently attributed to the Syrian regime by the United Nations and the OPCW on nine occasions, both before and after it became a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2013. As a party to the Convention, the regime has the obligation to submit timely, accurate and complete declarations related to chemical weapons and chemical weapons facilities on its territory. Yet 10 years later, the declaration submitted by the Syrian regime still cannot be considered accurate and complete by the OPCW Technical Secretariat, owing to the remaining gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies.

We are closely following how the OPCW's efforts to clarify all outstanding issues are reciprocated. The Technical Secretariat is still waiting for sufficient technical information and explanations regarding its questions concerning various cases, including the detection of a Schedule 2 chemical, the detection of a chemical of a dual-use nature at the Barzah facility and the unauthorized movement of two cylinders used in the Douma attack. We take note of the resumption of the consultations between the Declaration Assessment Team and the Syrian National Authority last month, in Damascus, more than two and a half years after the previous round, following the Syrian regime's withdrawal of its conditions on the composition of the DAT delegation. We also look forward to the report of the Technical Secretariat on its exchange with the regime regarding the analysis of samples collected by the DAT during the limited in-country activities in April, which the OPCW Director-General's report states revealed the presence of indicators of undeclared chemical agents.

We call on the Syrian regime to comply with its obligations and to fully cooperate with the OPCW, in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention and resolution 2118 (2013). Preventing impunity and ensuring accountability for the use of chemical weapons are essential to preventing the recurrence of similar incidents. With that understanding, Türkiye co-sponsored the decision entitled "Addressing the threat from chemical weapons use and the threat of future use", which was adopted at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. We will continue to support the efforts of the United Nations and OPCW to establish the facts about the use of chemical weapons in Syria and to hold all perpetrators to account.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.