



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden

Statement by Sweden
One Hundred and First Session of the Executive Council
of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
H.E. Ambassador Johannes Oljelund
Permanent Representative of Sweden to the OPCW
The Hague, 4-7 October 2022

Chair,

Sweden associates itself with the statement by the European Union. The following additional remarks are made in a national capacity.

This meeting of the Executive Council takes place in a deeply challenging security environment. Sweden condemns in the strongest terms the Russian Federation's brutal and unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, and reaffirms its unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia's invasion and threat to use weapons of mass destruction are flagrant violations of international law, including the UN Charter. We demand that Russia abide by its international obligations, immediately ceasing all military actions and withdrawing from Ukraine.

Sweden is appalled by the Russian forces' continued attacks on industrial infrastructure, including chemical industrial plants in Ukraine, with severe risks for human and ecological disaster. The Russian federation also continues to systematically spread disinformation and false accusations directed at Ukraine regarding preparations for both chemical and biological provocations.

Chair,

While some states continue to undermine the multilateral rules-based international order and the integrity of multilateral institutions, others do their utmost to protect these principles and values. In this context I want to extend Sweden's warm thanks to Director-General Fernando Arias and the Technical Secretariat for their untiring and professional work in ensuring the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention"), despite the very challenging circumstances, and to reiterate our confidence in the OPCW's professionalism, impartiality and expertise.

I also want to express Sweden's appreciation for ambassador Ziad M. D. Al Atiyah for able chairing of the work of the Executive Council and for ambassador Kuusing's admirable guidance

of the work of the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference.

Chair,

It is deeply regretful that the Syrian Arab Republic continues its stance of non-cooperation with the OPCW. The decision of the Conference of the States Parties at its Twenty-Fifth Session to suspend the voting rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic was an appropriate response to a continued violation of the Convention. Only the Syrian Arab Republic can take the steps needed to redress the situation. We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to reveal the full extent of its chemical weapons programme and to fully comply with the Convention.

Sweden reiterates its full support for the work of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). We continue to follow the reporting of the FFM and the IIT closely, as crucial steps towards accountability for the use of chemical weapons. We commend the relentless efforts of the DAT to ensure that the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic can be considered accurate and complete. We call on the Syrian Arab Republic to fully cooperate with the Organization and its Technical Secretariat.

Chair,

It is deeply regretful that we, at yet another meeting, must conclude that Russian authorities have failed to respond to demands of the international community, to disclose the circumstances around the assassination attempt on Alexei Navalny, and to fully cooperate with the OPCW to ensure an impartial international investigation. The questions that were put to the Russian Federation by 45 States Parties in October 2021 remain unanswered.

Sweden reiterates that it is the responsibility of all States, including the Russian Federation, to ensure that the global ban on chemical weapons is respected, and that accountability for the use of chemical weapons must be established and upheld.

Chair,

Women are still under-represented in all disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control fora. Sweden appreciates the efforts made by the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat to enhance women's equal participation and representation among its staff. We hope that the follow-up to the Gender Audit will promote further progress. We also welcome the Secretariat's efforts to enhance gender mainstreaming throughout the OPCW's capacity-building activities and external assistance. We look forward to the development of a Gender and Diversity Strategy.

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Lastly, I would kindly ask that this statement be issued as an official document and placed on the public website.

Thank you.