



Statement delivered by Ambassador Thomas Schieb
Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to the
OPCW

CSP-28 under agenda item 9 d (SYR)

Mr Chairman, Director-General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me congratulate our Chairman, Ambassador Suljuk Mustansar Tarar of Pakistan, on his election as Chairperson of the 28th Conference of States Parties.

My delegation assures you of our full support.

Syria's continuing non-compliance with the Convention is extremely concerning. More than 10 years after acceding the CWC, Syria continues to evade clarifying cases of use of chemical weapons as well as gaps and discrepancies of its initial declaration. Only very recently the TS again raised concerns about possibly undeclared quantities of chemical agents as well as additional undeclared chemical agents, which experts of the TS had discovered in facilities of the Syrian regime.

It took 2 ½ years for the technical consultations between the Syrian regime and the Declaration Assessment Team to resume in November. The dropping of objections by Syria to issue entry visas for OPCW inspectors has been long overdue and constitutes frankly a simple responsibility for a State Party. In the light of the more recent information coming from the TS it is difficult to believe that the Syrian side has any intention to engage seriously with the TS. Rather, we see Syria continuing with its delaying tactics.

In January, the OPCW's Inspection and Investigation Team issued a report that found the Syrian regime responsible for a deadly chemical attack on the Syrian town Douma in April 2018, killing 43 individuals and affecting dozens more. This is the ninth instance of chemical weapons use independently attributed to the Syrian regime by UN and OPCW mechanisms since Syria joined the CWC in 2013.

We have to conclude: Syria's capability and demonstrated willingness to use chemical weapons remain a threat to international security and stability.

For us States Parties it would be highly irresponsible to turn a blind eye to Syria's behaviour. We have to continue to keep pressure on Syria to fulfil its obligations.

What makes matters worse is that also non-state actors constitute a continuing threat to the CWC, as shown by ISIS's use of chemical weapons in Syria and Iraq.

In order to uphold the integrity of the Convention, we must address the continued threat of CW use both by Syria and other actors, including non-state actors. This is why we very much support the adoption of a decision by the CSP, which would help prohibit and prevent the transfer of toxic chemicals to Syria. We call on States Parties to support and co-sponsor this important decision.

We kindly request that this statement be designated an official document of this Conference session and posted on both the external server and the public website.