

Thematic Discussion on Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

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Statement delivered by H.E. Ms. Rosemary McCarney, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the Office of the United Nations and to the United Nations Conference on Disarmament in Geneva

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Mr. Chair,

The taboo against the use of chemical weapons has been under broken. Toxic chemicals have been used as weapons in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia, and the United Kingdom.

All States must comply with their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and international humanitarian law, and cease any activity that contravenes these obligations. The now-defunct Joint Investigation Mechanism (JIM) of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the UN found the Syrian regime responsible for three chlorine attacks and the sarin attack in Khan Shaykhun. We urge Syria to fully declare and destroy the chemical weapons it retains.

Regarding the use of the chemical nerve agent Novichok class in Salisbury on March 4, 2018, we have full confidence in the UK's assessment that the two suspects in the poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal, were officers from the Russian military intelligence service and that this operation was almost certainly approved at a senior government level. We urge the Russian Federation to declare its offensive Novichok program to the OPCW. Finally, we call on all States not party to the CWC to ratify or accede to it as soon as possible and in doing so declare any chemical weapons programmes they may have.

Given that many chemical weapon attacks in Syria remain unattributed due to Russia's veto of the JIM renewal at the UN Security Council, Canada welcomes the decision taken at the CWC's Fourth Special Session of the Conference of States Parties that gives the OPCW the mandate to attribute responsibility for chemical weapons attacks. The meeting was well attended and support for the decision was broad. It is unacceptable for States Parties to spurn their obligations under the CWC, and we will work with all parties to uphold the norm and ensure accountability of those who break the rules. Canada expects the OPCW to continue its professional and unbiased work in attributing responsibility for these and any further chemical weapon attacks.

Canada will continue to do its part to mitigate chemical weapon threats globally. To date, Canada has contributed over 41 million dollars for chemical weapons destruction, monitoring, verification and investigation efforts in Syria, Iraq, and Libya. Under

Canada's current Presidency of the *Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction (GP)*, we are coordinating further GP efforts to collectively mitigate global WMD threats.

Thank you.

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