



## Director-General's Statement at the 34<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Executive Council

Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome you to the 34th meeting of the Executive Council.

As mandated by the decision of the Council on the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons [EC-M-33/DEC.1], my first monthly report [EC-M-34/DG.1] on the implementation of this decision was issued on 25 October 2013. The report provides information on the progress made by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of the Executive Council decision and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) as well as the mandated activities carried out by the Technical Secretariat pursuant to these decisions and covering the period up to 22 October 2013.

As requested by resolution 2118 (2013), the Secretary-General transmitted my report to the United Nations Security Council on 28 October 2013 under the cover of a letter that also includes his report on the activities of the United Nations in support of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission.

On 23 October, four days ahead of the date set by the Council, Syria submitted its formal initial declaration required under Article III of the Convention. In the preparation of this document, the Technical Secretariat provided all necessary assistance to Syria.

In the period since my report was issued, the initial inspections of CW related facilities and the first round of other verification activities in Syria have been completed within the target dates of 27 October and 1 November respectively. This includes verification of the functional destruction of critical specialised equipment at all of the declared chemical weapons production facilities and filling and mixing plants both stationary and mobile in Syria.

21 of the 23 sites declared by Syria have been inspected covering 39 of the 41 facilities located at those sites. The two remaining sites could not be visited due to safety and security reasons. These two sites have been declared by Syria as inactive. The items from these sites were moved to other accessible sites and verified against the disclosure. The Joint Mission will verify these two remaining sites as soon as conditions permit.

For the month of November, verification of destruction of category 3 chemical weapons will continue and destruction of specialised equipment and buildings at production, mixing and filling plants is also envisaged. To date, the Syrians have reported the destruction of all category 3 chemical weapons at one site, amounting to a total of 99 warheads. Another 55 warheads, at another site are expected to be destroyed today, thereby completing the destruction of category 3 chemical weapons for a second site. As of today, category 3 destruction work has commenced at a

cluster of 5 additional sites which hold a total of 424 bombs and 63 warheads. A report on the verification of these activities is expected from the field mission.

With initial inspections having been completed, team rotation is underway. An advance team of 5 inspectors have already joined 2 OPCW staff in the Joint Mission in Syria. An additional 8 OPCW members will arrive in Damascus tomorrow, bringing the total number of staff in Damascus to 14 and one logistics officer will continue to be based in Beirut. Last week, I welcomed a first group of the 22 inspectors that have returned to The Hague.

As you are aware, the Joint Mission is operating in an active war zone. This has serious implications for the safety and security of all personnel and their ability to carry out their mandated task. The courage of the OPCW inspectors and all other staff of the Mission, and their dedication and steadfast professionalism in the conduct of their difficult work in Syria, is admirable.

With important initial verification work having been completed within the first set of target dates, we now need to plan for the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles in Syria. At its next meeting scheduled for 15 November the Executive Council will be required to adopt a decision that establishes the detailed requirements, including intermediate milestones, for the complete elimination of chemical weapons in Syria in the first half of next year.

As part of its initial declaration, Syria has submitted its general plan for destruction that highlights the practical challenges of carrying out destruction activities in the midst of an armed conflict. Syria has also highlighted resource limitations in implementing such a programme. I have reviewed the submission closely and have concluded that the proposal by Syria that destruction of chemical weapons be carried out outside its territory constitutes the most viable option available to fulfil the requirements established under EC decision [EC-M-33/DEC.1] and UNSC resolution 2118 for the safe and expeditious elimination of chemical weapons in Syria.

This option, as identified by Syria, requires thorough planning and careful execution. Between now and the next meeting of the Council on 15 November, the operational planning group will engage in close consultations with a Syrian delegation that arrives in The Hague today. I trust that delegations will similarly consult closely with a view to drafting a decision that allows Syria to carry out the proposed programme in a manner that is consistent with the object and purpose of the Convention and advances the objectives of the Council's decision of 27 September and the resolution of the Security Council.

Total contributions to the trust fund as at 1 November 2013 are EUR 9.7 million from Canada, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. A further fourteen States Parties have either pledged to contribute or have inquired about making a contribution.

I should advise that I met with Ms Sigrid Kaag on Saturday 19 October and Friday 1 November. She keeps us informed about her meetings and other activities. I have invited her to attend the EC Meeting on 15 November.

I should also like to advise that I have appointed Mr Aamir Shouket, from Pakistan, as Deputy Chief of Cabinet who will work at present as the OPCW Liaison Officer with the Special Coordinator.

Before I conclude, I wish to acknowledge with deep gratitude the communications that I have received from many dignitaries around the world felicitating the Organisation for being awarded the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize. These include messages from His Majesty the King Willem Alexander, Prime Minister Rutte and Foreign Minister Timmermans. Meanwhile I have approached representatives of regional groups and we hope to finalise by the middle of this month, a cross representational OPCW contingent that will attend the ceremonial events in Oslo awarding the Prize to our Organisation next month.

Thank you

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*As the implementing body for the Chemical Weapons Convention, the OPCW oversees the global campaign to permanently eliminate these weapons. Since its entry into force in 1997 the Convention has become the fastest growing arms treaty in history with 189 States Parties, and more than 80% of all declared chemical arsenals have already been destroyed under OPCW verification - an unprecedented achievement in the annals of disarmament.*