

**NOTE BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL****OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS WITH THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC  
REGARDING ITS CHEMICAL WEAPONS DECLARATION<sup>1</sup>**

1. The Executive Council (hereinafter “the Council”), in paragraph 6 of its decision entitled “OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic” (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016), demanded that “the Syrian Arab Republic comply fully with its obligations under the Convention, Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1,<sup>2</sup> and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), including the expeditious resolution of all outstanding issues regarding its initial declaration and related disclosures”. In subparagraph 12(b) of the same decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall “report to the Council at all future sessions, pursuant to paragraph 40, Article VIII, of the Convention, any unresolved doubts, ambiguities or uncertainties regarding the compliance of the Syrian Arab Republic with the Convention”.
2. The Technical Secretariat (hereinafter “the Secretariat”), through the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), has continued its work in order to ensure that all declaration-related requirements have been met by the Syrian Arab Republic. In this context, the Secretariat has kept the Council informed on a regular basis of the work and outcome of all of its engagements with the Syrian Arab Republic.
3. In line with the agreement reached between the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic during a meeting in February 2019 in Beirut, Lebanon, the twentieth and twenty-first rounds of consultations between the DAT and experts from the Syrian National Authority took place from 18 to 21 March 2019 in The Hague and from 10 to 17 April 2019 in the Syrian Arab Republic, respectively.
4. The main aim of the twentieth round of consultations was to discuss the way forward and agree upon a plan of activities in order to resolve all outstanding issues. In this context, the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic met between 18 and 21 March 2019 at the OPCW Headquarters in The Hague, the Netherlands. In the course of this round of consultations, the Secretariat and the Syrian National Authority representatives reviewed the status of all outstanding issues. The issues were re-grouped, and an action plan was developed for each issue based on the activities that could be conducted to resolve it.

<sup>1</sup> The details of the twentieth and twenty-first rounds of consultations are reported in EC-91/HP/DG.2, dated 1 July 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Dated 27 September 2013.



5. The DAT was subsequently deployed to the Syrian Arab Republic between 10 and 17 April 2019 to continue technical meetings and to begin implementing the plan of activities. During this visit, the DAT held a number of technical meetings with the Syrian National Authority, conducted one interview, and also conducted field visits to five sites from which it collected a total of 33 samples, which will be further shipped to OPCW designated laboratories for analysis.
6. In the course of the twenty-first round of consultations, the Syrian Arab Republic provided new information and documents that may help in further clarifying some of the outstanding issues. In this regard, in connection with one of the outstanding issues, the Syrian Arab Republic acknowledged research and development activities related to some previously undeclared chemical warfare agents, indicators of which were found in samples collected by the DAT in 2016. All of the new information, together with the results of the analysis of samples collected by the DAT during the twenty-first round of consultations, will be analysed and discussed over the course of future consultations.
7. During the field visits to several previously declared chemical weapons-related sites, the DAT noted the absence of remnants of destroyed production equipment and chemical munitions. The Syrian Arab Republic and the DAT had agreed in 2015 to retain these items at their original locations, in order to keep them available for activities aimed at clarifying gaps, discrepancies, and inconsistencies in the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration and subsequent submissions. In order to gather further information with regard to this issue, the DAT conducted an interview with a senior military official in charge of the aforementioned activities. The officer reported that he ordered the removal of the remnants of the equipment and munitions to a nearby smelting company, where they were irreversibly destroyed. The DAT highlighted to the Syrian National Authority the impact such removal will have on the plan of activities established during the twentieth round of consultations. The Secretariat will further engage with the Syrian Arab Republic to identify appropriate mitigating measures that could be put in place to overcome this situation.
8. The noted absence of remnants of destroyed production equipment and chemical munitions from several sites, owing to their removal to and destruction at the smelting company, will reduce the scientific input required for technical discussions on outstanding issues.
9. Moreover, during one of the field visits to a previously declared chemical weapons production facility, the DAT observed a number of gas cylinders by the side road behind the facility. Representatives of the Syrian National Authority explained that the cylinders were used to store certain chemicals planned to be used in the production process and that they were declared to the Secretariat. The DAT advised the Syrian Arab Republic to retain these cylinders at their current location until further notice. Considering that the Secretariat has not been able to confirm the declaration of the gas cylinders at this site, or their origin or purpose, a new issue has been raised. In keeping with the previous instances in which undestroyed items were found by the DAT at declared chemical weapons sites, the Syrian Arab Republic will be requested to declare and destroy the above-mentioned gas cylinders.
10. The Director-General appreciates the Syrian Arab Republic's provision of new information and documentation that could contribute to the resolution of some outstanding issues. The Director-General encourages the Syrian Arab Republic to continue its engagement with the Secretariat by working, inter alia, on finding

historical documents, such as upward reporting, as discussed in the latest two rounds of consultations, and on providing access to personnel with strategic and tactical knowledge of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

11. The Director-General continues to reiterate the Secretariat's commitment to assisting the Syrian Arab Republic, through the agreed Structured Dialogue, with the full implementation of its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention"); Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1, EC-81/DEC.4 (dated 23 March 2016), and EC-83/DEC.5; Conference of the States Parties decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 (dated 27 June 2018); and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), relating to the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.
12. At this stage, the Secretariat is still not able to resolve identified gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies in the declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic, and therefore cannot fully verify that the Syrian Arab Republic has submitted a declaration that can be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Convention or Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1.

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