Mr. Chairman,


Our respective countries intended to join consensus on this resolution to reflect our enduring support for the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Our position on this resolution also underscores our continued commitment to the international effort to eliminate the Syrian chemical weapons program in its entirety. On this latter point, however, we
believe this resolution should have gone further in addressing the use of chlorine as a chemical weapon in Syria, and the gaps and discrepancies in Syria’s CWC declaration. These are very serious concerns which pose a fundamental challenge to the CWC, and they must be fully resolved to ensure the cessation of chemical weapons use in Syria, and the complete elimination of Syria’s chemical weapons program.

On September 10, 2014, the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission, set up by the Director-General to establish the facts regarding allegations of continued chemical weapons use in Syria, concluded that the testimony of primary witnesses and supporting documentation, including medical reports and other relevant information, constitutes a compelling confirmation with a high degree of confidence that chlorine was used as a weapon, systematically and repeatedly in attacks against three villages in northern Syria during April and May of 2014. The Fact-Finding Mission also emphasizes that “in describing the incidents involving the release of toxic chemicals, witnesses invariably connected the devices to helicopters flying overhead.” It is well known that only the Syrian military possesses the capability to use helicopters in such attacks.

The conclusions and evidentiary findings of the Fact-Finding Mission report implicate the Syrian government in deadly chemical weapons attacks. The use of chlorine or any other toxic chemical as a weapon is a clear breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention and of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2118. Such a breach raises serious concerns about the willingness of Syria to comply with its fundamental treaty obligations not to possess or use chemical weapons.

Mr. Chairman, our countries also remain deeply concerned about the important questions raised by the gaps, discrepancies and inconsistencies in Syria’s CWC declaration. It is incumbent upon the Syrian Arab Republic to provide the international community with credible evidence to support its claims that it has fully abandoned its chemical weapons program.

The Syrian CW file remains open and will not be closed until all of these issues are fully addressed and Syria complies with its obligations under the CWC and UN Security Council Resolution 2118.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.