Chair

No circumstances justify the use of chemical or biological weapons and the international community must remain steadfast.

Maintaining this prohibition and preventing the re-emergence and proliferation of these weapons demands the resolve of all States Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

That resolve has been tested by the use of chemical weapons in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia and the UK, by State and Non-State Actors.

However, States Parties have shown that they can and will respond promptly and effectively to those who challenge the Convention, and its implementation.

We have demonstrated our collective resolve to hold those who use chemical weapons to account.
We have ensured that the Convention’s implementing body, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), can take on an attribution capability, including with a global reach.

Chair

It is absolutely appropriate that the OPCW undertake thorough, independent, impartial investigations so that those who violate this prohibition are identified and held to account.

Identifying perpetrators is crucial and necessary if we are to deter others who consider they can use such weapons with impunity.

Australia welcomes the OPCW’s Investigation and Identification Team now being operational and commend the thorough, impartial and independent work of the OPCW’s Fact-Finding Mission, and Declaration Assessment Team, on Syria.

We appreciate the OPCW Technical Secretariat’s work in helping to build and develop the capacity of States Parties to meet their obligations under the Convention.

Chair

No-one is immune from the devastating, broad-ranging effects of chemical weapons and it is in all our collective security interests to support the well-established international norms against their use.

Australia is committed to the principles and objectives of the France-led *International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons*, as set out in the Joint Statement by Participating States at this UN General Assembly.

We are also working with Switzerland and the US towards an understanding that the aerosolised use of Central Nervous-System Acting Chemicals in law enforcement is inconsistent with the Chemical Weapons Convention.
We strongly encourage participation in the November Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, where we will again consider important matters which will further strengthen the effectiveness of the Convention, to the benefit of all.

Chair

We must continue to work collaboratively to adjust policies and regulations to reflect new constantly-evolving threats and technologies in the WMD field, including through robust export controls.

Internationally, our role as permanent Chair of the Australia Group export control regime and our active participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) make tangible contributions to international cooperation, including implementation of Resolution 1540.

Australia is committed to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) which underpins international norms against biological weapons.

We encourage all BWC States Parties to participate constructively and pragmatically at the Meeting of States Parties in December and to look for practical, helpful ways to strengthen the Convention, including in the lead up to the next Review Conference in 2021.

Thank you

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