



**Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations**

685 3rd Ave., 11th floor, New York, NY 10017 • Tel: (212) 599-0950 • Fax: (212) 599-1020 • Svgmission@gmail.com

Statement

by

H.E. Halimah DeShong

Deputy Permanent Representative

Arria-Formula Meeting

Implementation of UNSCR 2118: OPCW FFM Report on Douma

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Thank you for the floor, Chair.

The weaponizing of toxic chemicals is unquestionably one of the great threats to international peace and security. The use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone and under any circumstances constitutes a reprehensible violation of international law and necessitates condemnation by the international community. Chemical weapons do not discriminate between combatants and civilians and their effects are horrifying. Perpetrators must not be allowed to operate with impunity. We must hold them accountable.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines therefore supports the mandate of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and all efforts made to ensure that applied science and technology is only used for peace, progress and prosperity of **all** humanity.

The OPCW bears the responsibility of ensuring that all facets and activities of the Organisation, including the work of the Fact-Finding Mission, the Identification and Investigation Team and the Declaration Assessment Team are impartial, transparent and not politicized. The OPCW must be above reproach, anything less erodes trust, undermines its efforts and renders it ineffective. For the Organisation to thrive and be a well-functioning multilateral body, which is able to fulfill its mandated purpose, state parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention must have faith in its composition and its findings must be able to withstand rigorous scrutiny.

Successful implementation of Security Council Resolution 2118 requires, and in fact, mandates the full cooperation of the Syrian Arab Republic with the OPCW. The Syrian government must therefore adhere to its international obligations and

allow the OPCW teams unimpeded access to conduct their work. Undoubtedly, cooperation becomes strained where deficits in trust exist. As such, the OPCW must consistently strive to improve and strengthen its internal structure and remain committed to upholding its own high standards, which merited the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013. Additionally, the importance that the role of dialogue plays must always be borne in mind. The perspectives of the Syrian government should always be given due consideration when adjudicating such issues that touch and concern their territorial integrity. Without the elements of cooperation and dialogue there can be no trust. Without trust, the implementation of the resolution will never be fully realized.

In the Security Council on 9th January, our Prime Minister, The Hon. Dr. Ralph Gonsalves noted *“one of the essential contributions to be made by small states like ours is the tireless advocacy for timeless principles enshrined in international law. With no ideological or geostrategic axes to grind, we consider it our solemn obligation not only to articulate these principles, but to ensure that they are applied consistently and upheld in the international community as universal truths, rather than selective, uneven and unpredictable tools to further hegemonic power or great power ambition.”* In this case, it requires us identifying and addressing shortcomings where we find them in our quest to prevent the development, stockpiling, transfer or use of chemical weapons to better protect the future of humanity.

Thank you.