



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

685 3rd Ave., Suite 1108, New York, NY 10017 • Tel: (212) 599-0950 • Fax: (212) 599-1020 •

svgmission@gmail.com | <http://svg-un.org>

Statement

By

**Ms. Diani Jimesha Prince
Counsellor**

Open VTC on Syria (Chemical Weapons)

United Nations Security Council

10 September 2020

New York

Please check against delivery

Thank you, Mr. President and thank you High Representative Nakamitsu for your briefing.

At the outset, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms its principled position that the use of chemical weapons anywhere and by anyone constitutes an abominable violation of international law. Chemical weapons atrocities cannot be ignored, and impunity cannot be encouraged. Perpetrators must be held accountable.

We reiterate our support for the mandate of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The OPCW bears a tremendous responsibility as the guardian of the Chemical Weapons Convention. It must therefore ensure that all facets and activities, including the work of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), the Identification and Investigation Team (IIT) and the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) are impartial, transparent and not politicized. The Organisation's findings must be able to withstand rigorous scrutiny to enable states parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to maintain confidence in its internal structure and processes.

This Council should support all efforts to strengthen the Organisation's capacity to ensure that the quality of its work remains of the highest standard. The OPCW must be above reproach, anything less erodes trust, undermines its efforts and renders it wholly ineffective.

We should also remain mindful that in our deliberations on this issue, we ought to consider the perspectives of the Syrian government, in respect for Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We must therefore encourage and facilitate dialogue to build trust, enhance cooperation and thwart divisiveness among states parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated the postponement of planned deployments and missions. Be that as it may, we are pleased to note that technical consultations between the OPCW and Syria continue despite the unprecedented circumstances.

We reiterate the importance of resolving all of the outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration. We commend the continued engagement on this matter, and it is our hope that sustained cooperation between the parties will assist in making progress in this regard.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines shares the vision of a chemical weapons free world and we support all efforts to make certain that applied science and technology is only used for peace, progress and the prosperity of all humanity.