



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

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Statement

By

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Counsellor**

Syria (Chemical Weapons)

United Nations Security Council

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Thank you, Mr. President and I also thank High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Nakamitsu, for her briefing.

The development, production, stockpiling and use of weapons of mass destruction are fraught with serious consequences for international peace and security. Accordingly, complete disarmament must continue to be a priority for the international community, and it requires an enduring commitment to the fulfillment of obligations encapsulated in core multilateral instruments, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention. Undoubtedly, the Convention remains an integral part of the global disarmament architecture and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is critical to its full and effective implementation, without which it will simply be reduced to ceremonial pieces of paper.

Allegations of the use chemical weapons ought to be given immediate attention and investigations should be comprehensive and in keeping with international best practices. The OPCW's indispensable role in this regard dictates that all of its activities be characterized by impartiality, transparency and non-politicization. This is crucial to promote trust and cooperation and to ensure accountability for acts committed in violation of the Convention. In support of the mandate of the Organization, we encourage all efforts aimed at strengthening its capacity to ensure that the quality of its work remains of the highest possible standard.

We note, with concern, the findings contained in the 12th April 2021 report of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). Saint Vincent and the Grenadines maintains the principled and well-established position that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone and under any circumstances constitutes an abominable violation of international law. Chemical weapons atrocities cannot be ignored, and impunity cannot be encouraged.

We have also taken note of the recent decision of the Conference of State Parties related to Syria. Indeed, diverging views exist, however, we should prioritize pragmatic action that builds consensus, thwarts further polarization and fosters cooperation among States-Parties. We must work together to ultimately achieve the collective goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

We underscore the importance of clarifying the gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the initial declaration and we recognize the continued efforts of both Syria and the Technical Secretariat in this regard, despite the global pandemic. We note that a new outstanding issue has been opened and will be discussed at the next round of consultations. It is our hope that the positive engagement and a continued commitment to dialogue will allow for a final resolution to all of the outstanding matters.

Thank you.