



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

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Statement

By

**Ms. Diani Jimesha Prince
Counsellor**

Syria (Chemical Weapons)

United Nations Security Council

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Thank you, Mr. President and I also thank Director-General Arias and Under Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Nakamitsu, for their informative briefings.

To begin, I will restate Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' well-established position that 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. This Council and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) bears the tremendous responsibility of protecting the international non-proliferation regime and future generations will judge us very harshly if we fail to act.

We, therefore, support the mandate of the OPCW and we encourage efforts aimed at strengthening its capacity to ensure that the quality of its work is of the highest possible standard. We continue to reiterate that all facets and activities of the Organisation, including the work of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) and the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) must be impartial, transparent and not politicized. The OPCW must be above reproach, anything less erodes trust, undermines its efforts and renders it ineffective. Its findings must be able to withstand rigorous scrutiny to enable states parties to maintain confidence in its processes. Further, consensus-based decisions ought to be pursued to prevent further polarization and divisiveness and to promote international cooperation.

We reiterate the importance of resolving the gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the initial chemical weapons declaration. The continued cooperation of the Syrian government is essential to the ongoing process and the full implementation of resolution 2118. Despite the obstacles presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, work must continue on this file and we encourage the parties to remain committed to continuing technical consultations. The Technical Secretariat and the various teams ought to be provided with comprehensive information and given access to effectively fulfil their respective mandates. We hope that all parties will engage constructively in this regard.

Consequently, the elements of trust and confidence are critical, as without them cooperation becomes strained. We therefore have a duty to promote and facilitate dialogue between the Syrian

Government and the OPCW. This not only demonstrates respect for the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, but it helps to foster much needed trust and cooperation between the parties.

The weaponizing of toxic chemicals is unquestionably one of the great threats to international peace and security. 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.

I thank you.