



**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 we join others in congratulating India for assuming the Presidency. We wish you the very best and you can count on our support. We also commend France for a well organized and successful Presidency last month.

Chemical weapons do not discriminate between combatants and civilians and their effects are horrifying. Their development and use remain a threat to international peace and security and constitutes a grave violation of international law. Allegations of the use chemical weapons therefore ought to be given immediate attention and investigations must be comprehensive, impartial, transparent and in keeping with international best practices. As such, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) bears a great responsibility as the guardian of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We acknowledge the efforts to continue work on this file, despite the impediments created by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we remain concerned by the continued long-term lack of movement. Gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the initial declaration remain unresolved and engagement is strained. Undoubtedly, there are many diverging views and trust deficits exist. It is therefore imperative that all parties prioritize dialogue and technical consultations to chart a practical and constructive way forward to make tangible progress. In this regard, we welcome the agreement between the OPCW and Syria to convene an in-person meeting to discuss relevant developments. This is indeed a positive and important step to bridge the gaps and to ensure the full implementation of Resolution 2118. It is our hope that preparations will be finalized soon.

We reiterate the importance of pursuing consensus-based decisions to thwart further polarization and foster cooperation among States-Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. Political differences ought to be set aside in favour of a commitment to working together to realize our collective goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains in support of the mandate of the OPCW and we encourage all efforts aimed at strengthening its capacity to ensure that it always functions as an effective multilateral institution.

Thank you, Mr. President.