



**Statement by Ms. Charlotte Skerten
DPR to the Conference on Disarmament**

**UNGA 74 First Committee
Other Statement**

23 October 2019

Thank you Mr Chair.

I take the floor in this debate to underline, once again, that New Zealand remains firmly committed to the achievement of a world without chemical weapons. We align ourselves fully with the statement delivered by France on behalf of the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons. I wish to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

It remains abhorrent to New Zealand that, in the 21st century, we as a community of nations have had to face ongoing use of chemical weapons. Yet the atrocities witnessed in recent years - in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia, and the UK - underline the need for renewed focus and determination in pursuit of chemical disarmament.

Any use of chemical weapons is highly repugnant and in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and other relevant international law. New Zealand condemns all uses of chemical weapons, anytime, anywhere and for any reason as we seek to uphold this important international prohibition.

We, like so many countries in this room today, have been deeply concerned about the impunity with which perpetrators have carried out chemical weapons attacks in recent years.

There must never be impunity for the use of chemical weapons. New Zealand will continue to be vocal in the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and other relevant fora in support of effective methods to identify those who use chemical weapons, and hold them to account. We strongly support the OPCW's Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), established in June 2018, which has a crucial task in identifying the perpetrators behind such attacks. We look forward to the issuing of the IIT's first report, which will represent further important progress in this regard.

We once again urge the small number of states that have not acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention to do so as a priority. Universalisation of this important treaty, the destruction of all chemical weapons, and effective means to identify, attribute and sanction chemical attacks, is the best way to ensure that chemical weapons truly become history.

Thank you Mr Chair.