STATEMENT BY

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on the occasion of the sixty-eight session of the General Assembly, First Committee,
Thematic Debate on Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

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Mr. Chairman,

In addition to the statement of the European Union, the Netherlands would like to underline the following recent developments.

First of all, we congratulate the OPCW, based in The Hague, with the Nobel Peace Prize. It is a just and timely reward for OPCW’s continuous efforts to achieve the goals of the Chemicals Weapons Convention. Especially now the OPCW plays a crucial and important role in the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. This Nobel Peace Prize can also be seen as a reward for the success of diplomacy in the area of security policy.

The Netherlands warmly welcomes the decision of the Executive Council of the OPCW of September 27 and the UNSC resolution 2118 on the destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons, based on the agreement reached between US Secretary of State, Mr. Kerry, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Mr. Lavrov. The Netherlands supports the implementation of these decisions with a financial contribution to the OPCW of 1,5 million EUR. Furthermore, the Netherlands is providing logistical and personnel support to the Joint Mission of UN and OPCW in Syria.

We congratulate our compatriot Sigrid Kaag with the appointment by the UN Secretary-General as Special Coordinator of the joint mission of the OPCW and the United Nations. Mrs Sigrid Kaag has an extensive experience within international organizations as well as in the region.

We wish her every success in the extremely challenging tasks that has been entrusted to her.

The opportunity is historic. The challenge is enormous. They require the full support of all of us. But it is first of all up to the Syrian regime to prove to the UN, OPCW and to the members of the international community its sincere and full cooperation in the destruction of its entire arsenal of chemical weapons and production facilities.

The horrific use of chemical weapons in Syria, or anywhere in the world, should never be repeated. Those responsible for the use of these weapons should be held accountable.

I thank you for your attention.