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**CUBA**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SORAYA ÁLVAREZ NÚÑEZ  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE OPCW  
AT THE NINETY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,  
Mr Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,

The Cuban delegation again welcomes H.E. Abdelouahab Bellouki as Chairperson of the Executive Council. We would like to thank the Director-General, H.E. Fernando Arias, and the Vice-Chairpersons of the Council for their reports.

The Cuban delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Fikrat Akhundov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

Cuba reiterates its long-standing, principled position on the achievement of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction. We emphasise that the existence and proliferation of this type of weapon continues to pose a very serious threat to international peace and security.

We also reiterate the condemnation of the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone, and under any circumstances.

In the challenging circumstances stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, we underscore the importance of the fact that the OPCW and all the States Parties continue to guarantee the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of all the provisions of the Convention, including those relating to the economic and technological development of the States Parties.

The Cuban delegation reiterates the importance of maintaining strict compliance with the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Council and underscores the exceptional nature of the modalities that have been adopted for the most recent sessions due to the challenges associated with COVID-19. In this regard, we express the need to maintain the active participation of all States Parties in the work of the OPCW, without discrimination or technical obstacles. The use of such modalities should stop following the termination of the special circumstances that served as their justification.



We recall the establishment of a coordination mechanism to revitalise existing facilitations, and we regret that there has not been one meeting of this mechanism since 2020 to date. We urge the Chairperson of the Executive Council to redouble efforts to explore ways and means to revitalise all facilitations, in line with the document stating the position of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, dated 4 October 2019.

The Cuban delegation expresses its profound concern over the attempts to accuse certain States Parties of using chemical weapons based on unfounded accusations unrelated to the provisions of the Convention or its associated work and verification procedures. This trend is becoming a dangerous precedent in the work of the OPCW—an international organisation with a technical mandate to verify full compliance of the States Parties with the provisions of the Convention.

We reiterate our call to the only State Party that possesses chemical weapons—the United States of America—to accelerate all measures necessary to guarantee compliance with the provisions of the Convention and its Verification Annex, with full implementation of the relevant decisions adopted at the OPCW.

The Cuban delegation welcomes the reports of the Director-General on the finalisation of the destruction of all the chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. We hope that cooperation will continue successfully between the OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic on all matters, without any external interference and with full respect for its sovereignty and the provisions of the Convention.

The Cuban delegation reaffirms that Article XI is one of the central objectives of the Convention. The full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of all the provisions of this Article is imperative, and in such a way so as to prevent any hindrances to the economic or technological development of the States Parties, while also promoting international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited by the Convention, as one of its basic pillars.

We underscore the importance of promoting international cooperation for the benefit of the States Parties via the transfer of technology, material, and equipment for peaceful purposes in the field of chemistry, and the elimination of any discriminatory restriction, including coercive, unilateral measures against other States Parties, which are contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Convention.

The Cuban delegation again denounces the United States of America for its imposition of a criminal economic, commercial, and financial embargo against Cuba for nearly 60 years. This policy, which is of a marked extraterritorial nature, violates the aims and principles consecrated in the United Nations Charter, and is evidence of the non-compliance of the United States with the national implementation of the Convention's Article XI.

The genocidal nature of the embargo has grown stronger in the midst of the colossal efforts Cuba is undertaking to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and has become the primary obstacle to obtaining medications, reagents, diagnostic kits, protective gear, disinfectants, and other substances, equipment, and consumables that the country needs to effectively fight this dangerous illness that affects us all.

We demand the end of this unilateral policy and the adoption of the necessary legislative measures by the United States of America, in accordance with Article XI of the Convention.

The Cuban delegation wishes to highlight the importance of the annual review and evaluation workshop of the components of an agreed framework for the implementation of Article XI, which serves as a useful platform to develop concrete measures and recommendations aimed at ensuring its total, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation. In this regard, we request that the facilitator for Article XI report on the ideas that have emerged from the workshops and other relevant activities that have taken place over the intersessional period so that these can be reflected in the report of the OPCW's bodies. We also request that the Technical Secretariat provide a full report on the weak areas and challenges in the effective implementation of decision C-16/DEC.10, dated 1 December 2011, and that it take into consideration, among other things, the proposals tabled by the Non-Aligned Movement and China (C-12/NAT.1, dated 6 November 2007) on the implementation of Article XI of the Convention, including an action plan.

It is imperative that the OPCW's Programme and Budget allocate sufficient financial, technical, and human resources to carry out the international cooperation activities that benefit the States Parties. The Cuban delegation supports the proposal from the Non-Aligned Movement and China to establish a special fund within the regular budget for international assistance and cooperation activities with the aim of keeping the funds allocated for these activities beyond the fiscal year.

The Cuban delegation joins the delegations marking the progress in the establishment of the OPCW's Centre for Chemistry and Technology, while reiterating the importance that the States Parties consider and adopt its modalities and mandate.

The Cuban delegation takes note of the facilitations under way on the organisational governance of the OPCW. We reiterate that the hiring of personnel to the Technical Secretariat should be fair and transparent, and should guarantee balanced geographical distribution, in line with the provisions set out in paragraph 44 of Article VIII of the Convention.

We reiterate that the discussions on the draft decision on the Rules of Procedure of the Advisory Board for Administrative and Financial Matters must proceed in an open and inclusive manner, while preserving its independence and avoiding its politicisation or polarisation.

The Cuban delegation wishes to express that the question of the use of aerosolised central nervous system-acting chemicals (CNS-acting chemicals) for law enforcement purposes should be addressed at the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, via dialogue and consensus, with full respect for the provisions of the Convention.

Cuba reiterates that the practice of taking decisions by consensus is the correct approach to achieving the object and purpose of the Convention.

The Cuban delegation requests that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Ninety-Eighth Session of the OPCW Executive Council and published on the Organisation's website and the Catalyst platform.

Thank you.