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PERU

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MARISOL AGÜERO COLUNGA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF PERU TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson, Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen, Permanent Representative of Norway to the OPCW,

I would like to extend my congratulations on your election as Chairperson of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties of the OPCW. Likewise, I would like to express the full support of the delegation of Peru for the success of your management in leading this Conference, which is taking place in difficult circumstances due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I would also like to thank Ambassador José Antonio Zabalgoitia, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the OPCW, for his dedicated work as Chairperson of the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties in representation of our regional group.

On that same note, my delegation welcomes the complete report by the Director-General presented at this session; we reiterate our full support for the work of the Technical Secretariat and its specialised mechanisms to meet the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention and ensure that it is adequately implemented.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China, with the exception of paragraph 16, which refers to Syria's cooperation with the OPCW.

Peru once again expresses its full support for the work of the Technical Secretariat in the Syrian Arab Republic, in particular the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). With regard to the latest reports of the DAT, we regret that the gaps and inconsistencies in the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic have not yet been resolved.

We also regret that the Syrian Arab Republic has not provided authorisation for the return of key members of the DAT to its territory, and that it has delayed the issuance of visas for staff members to work in the office used by the OPCW in Damascus. Without a doubt, these actions do not reflect an attitude that is cooperative or constructive towards the specialised mechanisms of the OPCW. My delegation reiterates that as States Parties, we all have the obligation to cooperate with the OPCW Technical Secretariat under paragraph 7, Article VII of the Chemical Weapons Convention.



Likewise, my delegation reiterates its profound concern surrounding the conclusions of the two reports published to date by the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), the second of which was published in April this year. These reports indicate that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Syrian Air Force is responsible for the use of chemical weapons both in the incident in Ltamenah in 2017, as well as the incident in Saraqib in 2018. For this reason, we reiterate our call to Syria to declare the chemical weapons that it currently possesses and resolve the outstanding issues related to the initial declaration of its chemical weapons programme.

Concerning the Organisation's budget, Peru will support the adoption of the OPCW's biennial Draft Programme and Budget for 2022 – 2023 and calls for the Technical Secretariat to avoid transferring resources from the international cooperation programme to cover other areas. We believe that all the resources allocated for international cooperation activities should be executed in a timely fashion.

With regard to the draft decision on the use of aerosolised nervous system-acting chemicals for law enforcement purposes, Peru believes that this issue has been widely discussed over the past ten years, and that there is scientific evidence demonstrating the lethality of the use of these chemicals when used in aerosolised form and on a massive scale. In this regard, my delegation understands that this does not imply the general use of these chemicals, rather only their use for law enforcement purposes. For this reason, Peru has decided to vote in favour of the draft decision on this issue.

Peru will continue to participate actively in the facilitation on organisational governance. We believe that modifying the hiring policy at the OPCW should be discussed in parallel with the adoption of concrete measures to ensure balanced geographical distribution across the staff of the Technical Secretariat. In this regard, it is crucial to bear in mind paragraph 44, Article VIII of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which stipulates that geographical distribution is to be an important criterion when recruiting Secretariat staff. We are confident that the discussions on this matter within the framework on governance will help identify solutions to this problem.

Finally, Mr Chairperson, Peru supports the renewal of the mandate of the Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Fernando Arias, for a new term at the head of our Organisation. We recognise his hard work over the course of these past four years, and we are confident that his experience will be of great value during his continued leadership of the Technical Secretariat. Peru will continue to support the Director-General as he continues to strengthen the OPCW, making it more effective and equitable.

I kindly request, Mr Chairperson, that this statement be considered an official document of this session.

Thank you.

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