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VENEZUELA

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC
OF VENEZUELA TO THE OPCW
AT THE 101ST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

The Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) again welcomes the Chairperson, H.E. Ziad M.D. Al Atiyah, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and wishes him every success in leading this session. We assure him of our willingness to collaborate with his leadership in a dedicated manner and towards achieving the common objectives of the Organisation.

Likewise, we extend our greetings to the Director-General and the Vice-Chairpersons of the Executive Council. We welcome their reports and find this an apt time to highlight the work carried out by the staff of the OPCW, as well as their constant dedication to achieving the Organisation's objectives.

The Venezuelan delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Fikrat Akhundov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the OPCW, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and China.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela recognises that the existence of weapons of mass destruction poses a threat to international peace and security, and reaffirms its commitment to global and total chemical disarmament towards compliance with international agreements on this matter.

The work of the OPCW towards the destruction of the greater part of the global combined stockpiles of chemical weapons was supported by the active participation of all the States Parties; however, today's challenges demand that we overcome the politicisation of the use of chemical weapons, as doing so considerably limits the continued work of the Organisation. This means we must apply our best efforts to strengthen the culture of consensus, cooperation, and true multilateralism.

In this regard, we hope that the preparation and convention of the Fifth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Convention in May 2023 will strengthen the work of the OPCW and the commitment of the States Parties, while contributing to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in line with the principles of the United Nations system, all towards guaranteeing a world free of chemical weapons, and by virtue of close international cooperation and assistance among Member States.



Along these same lines, our delegation is concerned that the sole possessor State will not meet the deadline set for the destruction of its chemical stockpile; for this reason we urge the United States of America, in its position as the sole possessor State, to comply fully with the provisions of the Convention, which have been developed by the policy-making organs of the OPCW in full accordance with existing international obligations regulating the work of the Organisation in such an important matter.

Regarding the elimination and destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, Venezuela highlights the content of the reports regularly submitted to this Council, which acknowledge the effective destruction of said weapons as the result of collaborative efforts with the OPCW, and which allow us to recognise the achievements made by the Syrian Arab Republic in very challenging security conditions while dealing with a multifaceted plan of aggression, both domestically and abroad. In this regard, we hope for continued successful collaboration between both parties in the full range of issues that can be addressed, without any external interference and with full respect for Syria's sovereignty (territorial and political).

As a State Party to the Convention dedicated to the eradication of chemical weapons, Venezuela reiterates its concern regarding the recurring use of alleged information taken from non-scientific sources in order to make accusations against certain State Parties. This practice constitutes the abandonment of the international commitments derived from the Convention and the regulatory development of the Organisation which, it is worth pointing out, has at its disposal a collection of tools that make it possible for it to scientifically verify any alleged use of chemical weapons.

It is thus an opportune time to mention the need for the OPCW to continue and expand its work in implementing the Convention, particularly with regard to the Articles related to the development of the States Parties and international cooperation and assistance, via the increased allocation of resources and support that will facilitate the transfer of technology and equipment, as well as building and strengthening the national capacities of the States Parties, especially those with developing economies, thus responding to the challenges in place due to current global socioeconomic conditions.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela believes that international cooperation, true multilateralism, and assistance are incompatible with the imposition of coercive unilateral measures, which are contrary to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and are a blatant violation of both international law and the Convention. In this light, we reiterate before this Council our condemnation of the impact that the coercive unilateral measures imposed by certain States Parties to the Convention are currently having on the Venezuelan people; they impede our institutional work with the OPCW, among other things that are of great importance to our people.

We greatly value the facilitations on the OPCW's organisational governance, as we believe that recruitment of personnel to the Technical Secretariat must be fair and transparent, and should guarantee balanced geographic distribution in line with the provisions of paragraph 44 of Article VIII of the Convention.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela informs the Chairperson of the Executive Council of its wishes for the successful outcome of the 101st Session.

Finally, we request that this statement be considered an official document of this session and published both on the Catalyst platform and the Organisation's website.

Thank you.