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URUGUAY

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE EASTERN REPUBLIC OF
URUGUAY TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson, Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela,

First of all, I wish to express my sincere congratulations to you on your election as Chairperson of the Conference of the States Parties at its Twenty-Seventh Session, and to assure you of my delegation's traditional support for the success of the Conference. We also appreciate the preparatory work carried out by the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen, who led the meetings of the Bureau of the Conference over the course of the year. Along these same lines, my delegation thanks the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, for the complete report presented at this session, and we reiterate our full support to the professional work of the Technical Secretariat and its various mechanisms.

The Eastern Republic of Uruguay, as an original signatory to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction—and one of the first countries to ratify it—strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by any actor, and under any circumstances, as it constitutes a flagrant violation of international law, and especially of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Uruguay recognises that the multilateral system is currently facing a serious period of crisis and conflict, and accordingly, reiterates its strongest commitment to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and disarmament and non-proliferation policies, and firmly supports the purposes and principles of the United Nations, especially the maintenance of international peace and security and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Uruguay values the ongoing efforts made by the United States of America towards completing the destruction process for its declared chemical weapons stockpile by the proposed deadline of September 2023. In this regard, my delegation understands that this will be a milestone of the utmost importance in the work of the OPCW and will begin a new stage focused on preventing the resurgence of chemical weapons and promoting the peaceful use of chemistry.

Likewise, Uruguay encourages Japan and the People's Republic of China to continue joining forces in order to destroy the chemical arsenal abandoned by Japan on the territory of the People's Republic of China.

Uruguay is following closely, and with concern, the developments in the Syrian chemical dossier, and encourages the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with the Technical Secretariat in order to clarify the discrepancies and gaps related to its initial declaration, based on the information exchanged in the framework of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT).



Uruguay firmly believes that through cooperation and dialogue among all the parties involved, the DAT will be able to deploy to the Syrian Arab Republic as soon as possible in order to continue its technical assessments. Likewise, Uruguay awaits the next reports from both the Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM) and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), and supports the technical, professional, and impartial work of said mechanisms, and of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW as a whole. My delegation wishes to point out that past confirmations of the use of chemical weapons in Syrian territory—through OPCW mechanisms—make it even more necessary to guarantee a smooth dialogue between the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation and the authorities of the Syrian Arab Republic. In particular, Uruguay calls upon the Syrian authorities to provide all the necessary visas to allow the different mechanisms of the Secretariat to enter their territory and work on site in order to guarantee an adequate assessment of the situation.

Uruguay reiterates the importance of continuing to support this multilateral forum, as well as the work of the OPCW Technical Secretariat, for the implementation of all the objectives of the Convention; this includes all issues related to international cooperation, which are essential for supporting the correct implementation of the Convention, as it is a multidisciplinary effort that involves many governmental, private, and academic actors. We recognise the vision and financial effort aimed at completing the construction of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre) in order to strengthen the scientific, technical, and institutional capacities of the States Parties, and especially for developing countries. Uruguay congratulates the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, and his entire team on this achievement, and remains available to continue working to nurture the work of ChemTech Centre.

We underscore the importance of cooperation on chemical matters, under the corresponding safety conditions, in order to prevent prohibited use and accidents, and to strengthen the capacities of laboratories and National Authorities towards the adequate and integrated management of chemical substances. In this regard, Uruguay recalls the recent inclusion, for the first time, of a laboratory located in a State Party from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC) as an OPCW designated laboratory, and highlights the need to promote cooperation among different public and private actors in order to include new laboratories from this region in the near future.

Finally, Uruguay also wishes to point out the need to proactively strengthen and promote equitable geographic representation across the staff of the Technical Secretariat. In this regard, and with a view to the Fifth Review Conference to be held in May 2023, the Technical Secretariat and the States Parties must work together to identify which improvements can be made in the recruitment process to correct the existing geographical imbalance.

In spite of the differences that have posed challenges to consensus-based decision making within the OPCW in recent years, the fact that more than 99% of all declared chemical weapons have already been destroyed proves that the Convention is indeed a successful disarmament treaty, and its integrity and principles must be protected by all States Parties. In this context, we must make the most of the next Review Conference, to be held in May 2023, with the aim of agreeing on the mission and vision of the OPCW for the next five years.

We request that this national declaration be considered as an official document of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties, and we request its publication on the Organisation's public website and on the Catalyst platform.