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EL SALVADOR

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR TO
THE OPCW AT THE FIFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE
STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE CHEMICAL
WEAPONS CONVENTION**

El Salvador congratulates H.E. Ambassador Henk Cor van der Kwast of the Kingdom of the Netherlands upon his election as Chairperson of the Fifth Review Conference of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Likewise, we welcome and congratulate the Technical Secretariat on the preparation for the Conference and for its hybrid implementation, providing visibility to the National Authorities from our capitals. For this same reason, we search for ways to formulate and implement new modalities for conducting these sessions in future, such as the continuity plan for activities, which was adopted this past March at the 102nd Session of the Executive Council.

My country recognises the work carried out by H.E. Ambassador Lauri Kuusing of Estonia, who for a number of months has managed the hard work of incorporating the contributions of the States Parties into a provisional text for discussion at this Conference. It is important for us to note the transparency and inclusivity of the work contributed by H.E. Ambassador Kuusing during the process, specifically in terms of addressing the regional groups and the efforts to incorporate different requests in the text that we will be assessing over the next days.

El Salvador notes that the verification regime is a fundamental pillar of the Convention, and an essential tool for confirming compliance with it. For this reason, the processes of verification inevitably involves the need for cooperation among all States Parties to the Convention. This implies the ability to validate the accuracy and completeness of the declarations of the States Parties by the Technical Secretariat, as well as the destruction and eradication of declared chemical weapons.

For the above, it is necessary to provide the Technical Secretariat and its Director-General—always under the strict principle of legality—with legal, regulated, and transparent mechanisms that facilitate the activities of investigation and inspection in an efficient, non-discriminatory manner. In this regard, we call upon the States Parties to comply with the Convention and cooperate in its implementation so that the work of the OPCW is not delayed and that verification efforts can be carried out with a greater geographical scope.

El Salvador assigns great importance to the preventative work of the OPCW concerning the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors, including illegal and terrorist groups. For this reason, we believe it is important that the OPCW is equipped with and trains in the use of new technologies that can prevent and monitor the illegal use of chemicals. Regular training for personnel and the National Authorities is also important, as is evolutionary work in the



development of technological mechanisms for prevention and response. It is in this regard that, when tackling threats stemming from the irresponsible use of artificial intelligence (AI), the best form of response is through the use of AI platforms.

We believe that the continuous work of the OPCW and the National Authorities together with the chemical industry will also help visualise different forms of use and the impact that can result from new technologies in the private sector. These will collaborate to distinguish forms of the peaceful use of chemistry, and ways to prevent its illegal use by non-State actors. We call upon the Organisation and the States Parties to reciprocally share with industry their experience in and approaches to protection against the threats posed by illegal groups. This addresses a range from chemical terrorism to potential forms of cyberattacks. In consideration of all the above, the efforts made for the future in search of ways to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons or the improper use of chemicals should also incorporate a research and development component in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

El Salvador recognises the successes achieved by the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach. We have had the opportunity to participate in training courses and the transfer of knowledge with the OPCW and many other countries in our regional group. Likewise, we believe that the collaborative work with academic leaders in underrepresented regions could serve as a timely means of helping mitigate, in its latest instances, the existing imbalance in geographical representation.

El Salvador applauds the completion of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre), which we believe will be of great service in the development of international cooperation and assistance programmes for the different regions and will improve the efficiency of the internal technical processes of the Organisation. The ChemTech Centre, as well as the implementation of the SIX platform for the secure change of information and the electronic declaration information system (EDIS), are evidence that the Organisation is dedicated to modernising its procedures and to information security for the transfer of data between itself and the States Parties.

Article XI underscores the importance of the exchange of knowledge and the skills necessary to achieve effective compliance and carry out the permitted practices in the use of chemistry. El Salvador will continue to foster the peaceful use of chemistry in line with the Convention and will continue to recognise the need for international cooperation and assistance in line with Articles IX and X of the Convention. Both of these constitute indispensable ways to transfer knowledge and preparation between the OPCW and the States Parties, thereby contributing to the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons and the promotion of the development of countries' chemical industries.

Universality is both an objective and one of the fundamental pillars of the Convention. El Salvador calls upon the States that have not yet acceded to the Convention to value its importance, as well as the benefits that its ratification brings. In this same way, the implementation of the Convention in the national legislation of the States Parties is instrumental in guaranteeing universality of the Convention. It is for this reason that our country finds itself in the final stages of adopting domestic legislation that complies with the regulatory standards of said international instrument.

With regard to the approaches to integrating personnel in the Organisation and with the aim of complying with the spirit of geographical balance as set out in paragraph 44 of Article VIII of the Convention, we urge the OPCW to achieve improved geographic representation. In this regard, we align ourselves with the comments and contributions made by GRULAC. For all the reasons addressed above, we now propose the utilisation of modern, technological mechanisms in the search for and assessment and selection of personnel across a more diverse geographical base.

El Salvador requests that this statement be considered an official document of the Fifth Review Conference and published on the Organisation's website and extranet.

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