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CUBA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. FERMÍN QUIÑONES SÁNCHEZ
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA TO THE OPCW AT THE
NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES**

Ms Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished Delegates,

The delegation of the Republic of Cuba would like to welcome Ambassador Vesela Korać of Croatia as the Chairperson of this Nineteenth Session of the Conference of States Parties, and express our confidence in her leadership in conducting this meeting toward a successful end. We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the new Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference and thank the Ambassador of Iraq, H.E. Sa'ad Abdul Majeed Ibrahim Al-Ali, and the outgoing team for their hard work.

Cuba fully aligns itself with the statement voiced by the honourable representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, who are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and China; at the same time, I would like to highlight some aspects that we consider to be of great importance.

The existence of weapons of mass destruction constitutes a grave threat to international peace and security. Cuba reiterates its position in favour of general disarmament, complete and immediate, under strict and effective international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

We welcome the fact that the Sixty-Ninth Session of the United Nations General Assembly was marked by the historic event of the first commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on 26 September per the decision of the United Nations General Assembly, following the suggestion for such by the Non-Aligned Movement, thus reaffirming nuclear disarmament as the Movement's highest priority in the field of disarmament.

The destruction of all categories of chemical weapons constitutes one of the fundamental objectives of the Convention. In this respect, the Third Review Conference reiterated that this process should be completed in the soonest possible time, in line with the provisions of the Convention and the Verification Annex, and with the full implementation of the relevant adopted decisions. Otherwise, it would be placing the credibility and integrity of this international tool at risk.



Cuba is firmly convinced of the importance of creating a zone free of nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in keeping with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and the General Assembly, and calls for all parties involved to adopt urgent practical measures to meet compliance.

My delegation would like to recognise the efforts made by the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the constructive cooperation and the commitment demonstrated by said country toward the elimination and removal of its chemical weapons outside of its territory in the midst of a complex security situation. At the same time, it welcomes close international cooperation and the assistance of the States Parties to achieve this goal, as well as cooperation between the OPCW and the United Nations during the entire destruction process.

With respect to the process of the destruction of chemicals weapons in Syria, we believe that using a technical analysis and avoiding a political focus should also be priorities. In this sense, we support the efforts that will help achieve a political solution of the conflict in this brother country and that will fully respect the sovereignty, independence, and integrity of Syria and the self-determination of its people.

Cuba would like to recall that the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has an important role to play in promoting the economic and technological process of the States Parties, particularly for less developed States.

The Cuban delegation recognises the efforts that the Division of International Cooperation and Assistance has made toward the complete implementation of the provisions set out in Article XI of the Convention.

Regrettably, the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI of this treaty continues to be an unresolved issue. The non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention implies the absence of any restrictions between the States Parties that go beyond those set out in the Convention itself. All of the States Parties have the legitimate right to participate in the broadest possible exchange of chemicals, equipment, and information in the field of chemistry for purposes that are not prohibited by the Convention; at the same time, all States Parties are obligated to facilitate this exchange.

It is illegal and impermissible that some States are putting into place unilateral measures that limit, restrict, or even prohibit in many cases, free exchange among States Parties in this field. The economic, commercial, and financial embargo imposed by the Government of the United States of America against my people for more than 50 years constitutes a flagrant violation of this multilateral treaty, and specifically of Article XI. This limits, among other things, the organisation of human resources, as well as the acquisition of technologies and chemical products that are essential for our development. The elimination of these discriminatory restrictions, which go against the letter and the spirit of the Chemical Weapons Convention, is imperative.

My delegation would like to report that it has circulated a national document pertaining to Agenda Item 18, which we hope will be examined and will help you understand the real damage that the unilateral measures imposed by the Government of the United States of America cause the Cuban chemical industry and the overall development of our economy.

At the same time, my delegation welcomes the recent presentation of the informal document from the facilitator of Article XI, which pursues the adoption of an action plan in this matter, and is ready to discuss this proposal with rigor and responsibility. We hope that a consensus-based solution will be reached that will allow us to set up a mechanism to monitor its implementation as is done for the other Articles of the Convention.

Cuba voices its satisfaction with the positive visit to Havana by the Director-General of this Organisation, His Excellency Ahmet Üzümcü, who held productive exchanges with the highest Cuban authorities. At the same time, we would like to highlight the successful completion of the Regional Course on Medical Aspects of Assistance and Protection against Chemical Weapons for States Parties in Latin American and Caribbean Region, which took place in my country on 20–23 October 2014.

I would note that the Cuban National Authority is currently providing its support to the National Authority of the Republic of Paraguay, within the framework of the mentorship programme promoted by the Technical Secretariat which is meant to facilitate national-level implementation of the Convention in that country.

All of the above demonstrates my Government's commitment to strict compliance with the Convention and its intent to cooperate with the Technical Secretariat and other States Parties in order to ensure the complete implementation of the Convention.

We reiterate, Ms Chairperson, this delegation's support for achieving the desired results during this Session of the Conference of States Parties.

We request that this document be circulated as an official document of this Session.

Thank you very much.

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