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COLOMBIA

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA
AT THE NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES**

Madame Chairperson, Honourable Delegates:

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to express to you and the other General Committee members the warmest congratulations on your election and, at the same time, assure you of Colombia's firm support of the work of this new Session.

First of all, I would like to state that Colombia, with its traditional stance of pacifism and its unwavering commitment to international law, is a country dedicated to disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

This commitment is set out in Article 81 of our Constitution, which prohibits "the production, import, possession, and use of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons".

My country emphatically rejects the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances by any state or non-state actor.

We are all aware that these weapons have not been used for legitimate defence, nor are they capable of distinguishing between soldiers and civilians in any type of conflict scenario. It is for this reason that their use over the history of humankind reaffirms the importance of the Chemical Weapons Conventions and confirms its validity.

This instrument is the second multilateral treaty that outlaws an entire category of weapons of mass destruction and the first of its kind that establishes a stringent verification and inspection system without undermining the peaceful uses of chemistry and while promoting international cooperation.

In this respect, and in keeping with the primary objectives of the Convention, I urge all delegations to honour our commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation, and to reaffirm at this Session a common vision wherein the science of chemistry is used exclusively for peaceful purposes, for the good of international peace and security.

My delegation welcomes the fact that universality of the Convention has nearly been achieved with its 190 States Parties, and invites remaining States to accede to this historic treaty, not only as a national commitment, but because of the danger posed by the diversion of chemical weapons through armed non-state actors.



My country is working on strengthening national capabilities, not only by promoting cooperative initiatives with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), but also by participating in meetings, courses, workshops, and seminars organised jointly by the OPCW and its Member States.

In this sense, I am pleased to reiterate that Colombia fully supports the initiatives of the OPCW meant to outlaw this type of weapon as a clear-cut and coherent mechanism that can be used to reinforce peace and security on our planet.

My delegation is convinced that the interaction among the States Parties and the Organisation is the best path toward strengthening national capabilities and guaranteeing the effective implementation of the Convention.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Joint OPCW-UN Mission which successfully destroyed the chemical stockpile of the Syrian Arab Republic this past September.

This is one of the Organisation's countless achievements over 17 years of continuous work to realise the objective and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Without a doubt, these efforts have contributed to slowing the aggravation of the conflict, offering a beacon of hope in a difficult global scenario fraught with a variety of conflicts.

Also deserving of special mention are the courage and commitment of the inspection team that contributed to the efforts to destroy all of the chemical weapons at the facilities declared by the Syrian Government associated with the production of said weapons.

My country recognises that the work done by the Joint Mission not only contributed to the guarantee of international peace and security, but also represents a major advance in the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), which was adopted in response to the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

In this regard, I would like to voice Colombia's appreciation for the signing of the agreement established between the OPCW and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) with the goal to continue working on monitoring and supporting the operations in the Syrian Arab Republic.

In conclusion, I would like to recognise the efforts of the OPCW toward achieving the goals of the Convention and its fight to free humankind from the harmful effects of this type of weapon.

I would like to ask that this statement be considered an official document of the Nineteenth Conference of States Parties.

Thank you very much.