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CUBA

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ZELMYS MARÍA DOMÍNGUEZ CORTINA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA TO THE OPCW
AT THE SEVENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

The Cuban delegation welcomes you to the Chair of the Seventy-Fourth Session of the Executive Council, which, we are certain, you will guide with the experience and professionalism which are your hallmark.

The delegation of Cuba fully supports the statement made by His Excellency, Mr Kazem Gharib Abadi, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China, and in which the positions we share are clearly stated.

We welcome the work of the Director-General, His Excellency, Mr Ahmet Üzümcü, for his efforts and dedication at the head of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW over the last four years.

Cuba is aware of the challenges which face us, and repeat that the OPCW must continue to be oriented towards the full achievement of the object and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We advocate the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, the existence of which is a grave threat to international peace and security.

In this context, the OPCW has an important role to play.

The destruction of all chemical weapons, and the verification thereof, must continue to be an OPCW priority. In this connection, the Third Review Conference reiterated that this process must be completed as quickly as possible, and that in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and the Verification Annex thereto, and with full application of the relevant adopted decisions.

Cuba supports the creation of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, in the Middle East. In this context, Cuba welcomes the adhesion of the Syrian Arab Republic to the Chemical Weapons Convention and its willingness to implement it right away.



For implementation of the Convention by the Syrian Arab Republic, the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW and the States Parties of this Organisation must make available to the Syrian National Authority all necessary resources, and must help it to comply with the provisions of the Convention, as well as with those of the decision adopted by the Executive Council on this matter.

Furthermore, we support efforts aimed at achieving a political solution to the conflict, which would respect the Syrian Arab Republic's sovereignty, independence and integrity, and the self-determination of its people.

We repeat that the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI is essential to achieving the object and purpose of the Convention. Regrettably, this task remains to be completed.

The OPCW has an important role to play in promoting the economic and technological progress of the States Parties, particularly the least developed of them. This is a standing claim, just and legitimate, on the part of the majority of the members of the OPCW.

Cuba considers it unacceptable that certain States Parties continue to apply unilateral measures which limit, restrict and even prohibit free trade in, and the transfer among States Parties of, chemicals, equipment and information in the field of chemistry for peaceful purposes.

The unjust, criminal blockade imposed by the Government of the United States of America against Cuba for over 50 years is a flagrant violation of the letter and spirit of the Convention, in particular Article XI thereof. We demand the immediate lifting of these discriminatory restrictions, which are explicitly prohibited by the Convention.

During the Third Review Conference, and in the final report thereof, the analysis of Article XI was accorded particular importance; this created the minimum conditions necessary for the consideration, at the earliest possible date, of the proposed Action Plan for the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of this important article, a proposal which was put forward by the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China. For this reason, Cuba again stresses the need to launch a detailed discussion on this proposal in the framework of the facilitation process that is already under way on this topic.

Allow me to conclude, Mr Chairperson, by emphasising the readiness of the delegation of Cuba to work actively and constructively with you and the other delegations. Once again, I confirm that you may count on Cuba's full support and cooperation.

I should be obliged, Mr Chairperson, if this statement could be distributed as an official document of the Seventy-Fourth Session of the Executive Council.

Thank you very much.