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ARGENTINA

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER NICOLÁS VIDAL
ALTERNATE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ARGENTINA TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTIETH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

We welcome you and reiterate our gratitude and confidence in your leadership of the Council's sessions.

We value the new information presented by the Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, in his opening statement. We welcome the new Deputy Director-General, Ambassador Hamid Ali Rao, who can count on the cooperation of the delegation of Argentina as he performs his functions.

The developments in the Syrian Arab Republic are among the most pressing challenges currently facing the OPCW. We note the progress reported by the Director-General in various matters and we are encouraged by the possibility of closing the chapter of the destruction of the chemical weapons production facilities as soon as possible. We await the Fact-Finding Mission reports, which are valuable tools for investigating the potential use of chemical weapons. The Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) has submitted a comprehensive report on the work done to date. We are confident that the collaboration required will continue so that the DAT will be able to achieve the goal for which it was created.

We highlight and support the recent creation, via United Nations Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), of the Joint Investigative Mechanism of the OPCW and the United Nations in the Syrian Arab Republic. This international instrument is a novel tool that complements what has been done by the Fact-Finding Missions in said country. The Mechanism has a double function: the main function is to determine who is responsible for the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. On the other hand, this entity serves as an important deterrent in preventing the future use of this catastrophic type of weapon. We hope that it will begin its work as soon as possible.

We are very concerned about recent reports of the possible use of mustard gas in Iraq. We welcome the announcement that OPCW experts will be deployed and that the Iraqi Government is making efforts to investigate these incidents.



With regard to the recent reports from possessor States, we believe that the top priority at present is that these States complete the destruction of their stockpiles by the established deadlines, and preferably even before the announced dates.

Another challenge facing the Organisation is the universality of the Convention. We would like to highlight the accession of Angola to the Chemical Weapons Convention as a very positive and outstanding event. Together with the recent announcements by Myanmar and South Sudan, it represents a shot of vitality for the Organisation and signifies an important contribution via the achievement of a world free of chemical weapons. We unite with all those who have congratulated the authorities of Angola for their decision to join the OPCW family.

We appreciate the efforts that both the Director-General and the staff of the Technical Secretariat are making toward achieving universality of the Convention. As we are now so close to our goal, with only a handful of states not yet party to the Convention, we encourage the exploration of all available initiatives to achieve this goal that we all share.

Another facet of universality is the effective application of the Convention by all States Parties.

This point brings us to note that the many activities being carried out by the Technical Secretariat to achieve various objectives are not compartmentalised, but rather reinforce one another. We believe that in many cases, the application of the Convention could be stimulated via activities in the field of international assistance and cooperation.

For this reason, now is a good time to recall the strategic importance of the activities in which the Technical Secretariat is engaged in promoting the development of scientific knowledge for peaceful purposes. During the discussions on the draft 2016 budget, we had the opportunity to reiterate this concept and support the need to allocate the resources necessary to attend to this important pillar of the Convention.

Still within the context of the discussion of the budget, we also underlined the current strategic importance of the activities that are currently being implemented by the Technical Secretariat and are aimed at carrying out the mandate to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons. The activities supported by the agreements made at the Third Review Conference are proposed by the Technical Secretariat in line with submissions from the States Parties and must be analysed based on their own merits and later financed accordingly.

Also on the topic of preventative actions, we would like to highlight the recent distribution of The Hague Ethical Guidelines that were adopted by scientific experts from all regions, thanks to Germany's initiative. We believe that these Guidelines will contribute to the responsible use of scientific knowledge. This is also an opportunity for us to address in greater detail the Advisory Board for Education and Outreach. On this point, we would like to emphasise the important work done by the Distinguished Ambassador of Panama, Mr Willys Delvalle, toward achieving a consensus on the project, which will be covered at this session.

The other great challenge that we must take on while the destruction of declared stockpiles and all categories of chemical weapons proceeds is determining the future priorities of the Organisation. The recent retreat for permanent representatives organised by the Director-General was very constructive, and it allowed us to visualise future areas in which a

consensus can be reached. We believe it would be a positive move to establish an inclusive mechanism with a fixed term to be managed by the States Parties for the purpose of determining the future profile of the Organisation.

Finally, we would like to reiterate the permanent position of Argentina in favour of collaborating, together with the OPCW, on the development of capacities in Latin America and the Caribbean. In this regard, we will continue to support joint efforts via courses in the field of assistance and protection against chemical emergencies, safety and protection for laboratories, and the reinforcement of capacities of customs officials and other future fields of action.

I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session.

Thank you.

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