



OPCW

Executive Council

Eighty-Fourth Session
7 – 9 March 2017

EC-84/NAT.22
7 March 2017
ENGLISH only

CUBA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SORAYA ALVAREZ NÚÑEZ
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mrs Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

The Cuban delegation reiterates their wishes of success as Chairperson of the Eighty-Fourth Session of the Executive Council and fully trusts in your capacity and diplomatic skill to successfully lead the works of this session.

My delegation thanks the report presented by the Director-General, as well as the updates provided by the Deputy Directors of the respective topics under his coordination.

The Cuban delegation adheres to the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the OPCW, on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

This year, we are celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, to whose full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation we are firmly committed.

The National Authority of Cuba, together with several institutions of the country, will develop an exhaustive programme to celebrate these two decades of work. The successful implementation of the Convention in the Republic of Cuba is one of the expressions of Cuba's commitment with the prohibition and elimination of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction.

The destruction of all kinds of chemical weapons is one of the pillars whose full completion is still pending in the work of the OPCW. We urge the possessor States to complete this process in a fast and secure way according to the dispositions of the Convention, its Verification Annex and with the full implementation of the adopted relevant decisions.

The debates on the future priorities of the OPCW have already started and it is essential to stress the comprehensive approach that must prevail during the entire process. All work documents and contributions submitted by the States Parties should be considered on an equal footing. All the pillars of the Convention should be included in a balanced way in order



to take into account, and reflect, all the interests and concerns of the States Parties in the recommendations derived from the OEWG-FP to the policy-making organs of the Organisation prior to submissions to the Fourth Review Conference. We reiterate our will to work towards the achievement of satisfactory results.

Likewise, among the future priorities of the OPCW, the Cuban delegation emphasises the necessity to implement Article XI in a full, effective manner taking into consideration the important mission of the Organisation in the promotion of economic and technological development of the States Parties and in the growing of the cross-cutting character of this pillar in all the aspects of the implementation of the Convention. Qualification and training are positive steps but they are not enough.

In acknowledging the efforts of the Division for International Cooperation and Assistance to fully apply the content of this Article, my delegation wishes to reiterate the need to adopt a renewed approach in all the aspects of the implementation of Article XI. All the obstacles faced in this process should be tackled, including the imposition of unilateral sanctions that hinder or prevent the broadest exchange of materials, equipment and technologies and to keep systematic follow-up on this topic as it is done with other pillars of the Convention.

The Cuban delegation places special relevance on Article XI, particularly for the persistence of the policy of the economic, financial and commercial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, which damages the sustainable development of our country, including the technological progress of the chemical, pharmaceutical and medical industries in Cuba. This policy not only goes against the disposition of this Article, but also against the spirit of the Convention to contribute to the achievement of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, to promote the free trade of chemical substances, and the international cooperation on this matter. This unilateral policy should cease.

My delegation wishes to address other topics included in the agenda that are of great importance for the development of our works.

We encourage continuing with the efforts to solve pending issues related to the Syrian Arab Republic, which maintains, despite the complex internal situation of the country, a close cooperation with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW. These questions should be solved on the basis of technical considerations, away from all politicised approaches.

As to the debate of the OEWG on Terrorism, and of the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors, we reiterate our concern in the face of the lack of international consensus on the definitions of terrorism and the so-called non-State actors. We remind them of the existence of specialised organs in the United Nations to go over these matters, with well-defined mandates and responsibilities. At the same time, we will continue to actively contribute to the debates of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and the Sub-Working Group of Non-State Actors.

The major contribution to the fight against terrorism will be the total elimination of chemical weapons, as the only guarantee that these will not fall into irresponsible hands. In this sense, my delegation reminds the States Parties of the obligations contained in Article I, Article IV paragraph 2, and Article VII paragraphs 1 and 2.

We have taken note of the initiative of the Technical Secretariat on the Rapid Response and Assistance Mission to assist States Parties with incidents of alleged use of chemical weapons under Article X of the Convention. We will continue studying this proposal and we keep the consultations on this matter with other States Parties and the Technical Secretariat.

The Cuban delegation once again expresses its will to work actively and in a constructive way with you and with all delegations to achieve success in this milestone year of the 20th anniversary of our Organisation.

Thank you very much.

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