



OPCW

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ENGLISH and SPANISH only

COLOMBIA

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF COLOMBIA
AT THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson, Mr Director-General, and distinguished delegates,

Allow me to begin by welcoming the Director-General, whom I congratulate on continuing his good work during the final stretch of his mandate with support from all of the staff of the Technical Secretariat. We have listened carefully to his opening statement and reflected on the important achievements that took place during the intersessional period, as well as the timely guidance for the work of this Executive Council. A warm welcome to you as well, Mr Chairperson, as always, I offer you the full support of my delegation for a successful outcome of this session.

I would like to first address the good news regarding the complete destruction of Category 2 chemical weapons outside of the territory of Libya, according to what was announced a few months ago. My country once again welcomes the generous assistance provided by a number of States Parties in order to achieve this important goal, which gets us so much closer to the complete elimination of all declared chemical weapons in the world.

Likewise, we congratulate the Republic of Iraq on completing the destruction of the remaining chemical weapons stockpiled at the Al Muthana bunkers, and we note the strong commitment of this country to comply with the purpose and object of the Convention.

Colombia strongly regrets that the Organisation—and this Council in particular—has not yet referred to the worrying conclusions of the seventh report of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism.

As we approach the first anniversary of the attacks in Khan Shaykhun, it continues to be imperative that this Council issue a statement on the horror of approximately 100 fatalities and at least another 200 casualties who survived the use of a toxic chemical—referring only to the incidents of September 2016 and April 2017. In this regard, my delegation believes that we cannot miss the opportunity to take action and demonstrate to the world that the OPCW is at the height of its responsibilities at the global level.

Also of particular concern is the meagre progress made on the unresolved issues related to the initial declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic. Nevertheless, we once again urge the Syrian authorities to maintain the dialogue and increase its efforts. Likewise, we reiterate our call for them to continue cooperating with the Technical Secretariat in order to destroy the two remaining facilities and make it possible to carry out the inspections requested by this



Council. Colombia maintains its full support for the work of the OPCW missions in the Syrian Arab Republic, specifically the Fact-Finding Mission and the Declaration Assessment Team.

We are pleased with the good start that the Open-Ended Working Group on Preparations for the Fourth Review Conference has had. We congratulate its Chairperson, Ambassador Puja of Indonesia, for the work that he has carried out in this capacity. We would like to express special appreciation for the Co-Chairpersons of the Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priorities for the draft recommendations that were presented. We support the procedure proposed at its latest meeting for the presentation of the final document, which will serve as a valuable contribution to the meeting scheduled for the end of this year.

We also welcome the report of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach, which was presented last month; the recommendations therein, as we expected, are particularly timely and look ahead to the preparations for the Fourth Review Conference. We are confident that they will also be very beneficial for our National Authority.

We further welcome the first meeting held by the Temporary Working Group on Investigative Science and Technology. We await with interest the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Scientific Advisory Board and especially the finalisation of its report for the Fourth Review Conference.

Finally, Colombia expresses its concern regarding the worrying information received about the use of a nerve agent this past 4 March in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and emphasises the importance that the facts be clarified as soon as possible.

I request that this statement be considered an official document of this session and published on the Organisation's public website.

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