



Republic of Cuba

**STATEMENT TO THE 88 SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE
ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS.
THE HAGUE, 10-13 JULY 2018.**

Madame Chairperson,
Mr. Director General:
Distinguished delegates:

The Cuban delegation congratulates the new chairperson of the Executive Council of the OPCW, Her Excellency Ambassador Jana Reinisová, of the Czech Republic. It also acknowledges the dedicated work of His Excellency Mr. Ahmet Üzümcü as Director General of the OPCW and wishes him success in his future responsibilities.

The Cuban delegation thanks the report presented by the Director General, and the updates given by the Vice-chairpersons of the Executive Council on the topics under their coordination and wish to welcome them to the new composition of the Council.

We adhere to the statement of Her Excellency the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement plus China, who are States Parties of the Convention for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

We also avails itself of this opportunity to welcome Palestine as new State Party of the Convention, after its accession on June 16.

Madame Chairperson,

Cuba, an original signatory and State Party of the Convention on Chemical Weapons, reiterates its firm rejection to the use of chemical weapons by any actor and under any circumstances, and maintains its historic position in favor of general and total disarmament under strict and efficient international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction.

The risk of linking terrorism and chemical weapons raises legitimate concerns among the international community, which we share. In the face of the complex international arena, the total elimination of the chemical weapons and the full, effective and non-discriminatory

implementation of all the provisions of the Convention are imposed as the only guarantees to avoid that these weapons fall on irresponsible hands.

The contributions of the OPCW to the struggle against terrorism, in full adherence to its mandate, depend more than ever on the efforts of the States Parties to settle the pending issues of the implementation of the Convention. The compliance with the obligations of the States Parties in accordance with Article I, Article VI, paragraph 2 and Article VII, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Convention significantly contribute to the capacity building to counter the threat posed by the link between terrorism and chemical weapons. In this regard, we would like to officially present the document "National Experiences: capacity-building to counter chemical terrorism."

Madame Chairperson,

The valuable data contained in the report on the status of the implementation of the Convention in the year 2017 (EC-88/CRP.1) show it is still pending the verification of around 3.7% of the destruction of the chemical weapons in the Category 1. In this sense, we urge the Possessor State to conclude this process in an expeditious and secure manner, according to the provisions of the Convention, its Verification Annex and with the full implementation of the relevant decisions adopted.

Madame Chairperson,

The promotion of technological and economic development of the countries according to the provisions on Article XI of the Convention is another pending issue for the Organization and the Member States, with the understanding of facilitating it by making possible the fullest possible exchange of chemical substances, equipment and scientific and technical information in the field of chemical activities for not prohibited purposes under the Convention and to not maintain any restriction over other States Parties that limits or hampers trade, development and promotion of scientific and technological knowledge in the field of chemical activities for industrial, agricultural, research, medical, pharmaceutical purposes, among others peaceful uses.

In this context, Cuba reiterates its condemn to unilateral and extraterritorial measures such as the economic, financial and commercial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, in clear violation of the International Law and the Convention. The blockade not only remains intact but it becomes tougher every time. Its negative repercussions in the promotion of the chemical and medical-pharmaceutical industries of Cuba, has a great economic, social and humanitarian impact for Cuba. This policy must end immediately.

Madame Chairperson,

The Cuban delegation attributes great importance to the annual celebration of the Workshop on the Implementation of Article XI. However, it is still required a space for reflection and action within the Policy-Making Organs of the Organization, which include the analysis of the actions undertaken in the past and their outcome, the identification of the causes that hamper the advance in this crucial matter as well as the new initiatives and proposals of commitment among the Member States, which should encompass all the aspects and obligations contained in this Article.

Regarding other important issues under the attention of the Division for International Cooperation and Assistance of the OPCW, the Cuban delegation acknowledges and appreciates the efforts related to the capacity-building for measures for the national implementation, one of the main breaches identified in the compliance with the main objectives of the Convention and they are essential to avoid the resurgence of chemical weapons. It is considered very helpful the 100 activities and programs executed since 2017, in which 2,270 experts from the 5 regional groups represented in the Organization took part, including participants from Cuba.

Cuba is willing to continue sharing its knowledge and best practices in this field with the interested States Parties and to take part in the Mentorship Program organized by the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW.

Likewise, Cuba follows attentively the joint efforts for the implementation of Article X of the Convention on assistance and protection against chemical weapons and reiterates its disposition to collaborate with any States Parties that requests it.

Madame Chairperson,

On document EC-88/DG.1 dated March 23, 2018, on the process of destruction of the chemical weapons in the Arab Republic of Syria, Cuba welcomes the substantive efforts made and the advance achieved in this sense, and continues to support the effective and successful collaboration between the OPCW and the Arab Republic of Syria.

We urge all delegations, in accordance with the mandate of the OPCW, to maintain a technical approach when dealing with the Syrian dossier. The politicization of the topic is unacceptable. The ongoing investigations should be conducted on an objective, unbiased and transparent basis. Cuba rejects the selective approaches to the application of the Convention and the creation of mechanisms and procedures outside of its legal framework.

It is inadmissible the allegations against any Member State without verified evidence, without the necessary professional investigations or conclusions based in the experience and technical knowledge of the OPCW.

Madame Chairperson,

The Cuban delegation also wishes to acknowledge the works of the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fourth Review Conference. Since its creation and beginning of its works, the Cuban delegation has submitted its modest contributions and reaffirms its commitment to continue to constructively support this process in order to attain results that reflect the interests of all Member States, in the framework of the application of the Convention.

The Cuban delegation considers it is necessary to make an integral analysis of the Convention and the submission of proposals that take into consideration its four pillars in an interrelated and balanced manner. It reiterates our disposition to work together to obtain results that promote the effective implementation of the Convention.

I request this statement to be considered as an official document of the 88th Executive Council of the OPCW and to be published in its external server.

Thank you very much.