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MEXICO

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MIGUEL RUIZ CABAÑAS
UNDERSECRETARY FOR MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS AND HUMAN RIGHTS
AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Ministers, Ambassadors, delegates,
Dear representatives of civil society,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Mexico is a tireless promoter of the prohibition of the use of weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, we cannot ignore the regrettable events in the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, Malaysia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland during which chemical agents or weapons have been used against civilians. We categorically condemn the use of chemical weapons and any other weapon of mass destruction, at any time, by any actor and under any circumstance. The use of these weapons constitutes a serious and flagrant violation of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights.

Mexico values compliance with International law and its operational regulations, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention, including its Verification Annex. Its strict implementation in the Fact-Finding Missions, together with the clear mandates of these missions, are central to the results of those investigations being conclusive regarding the use of chemical weapons in a specific place, and in this way, in identifying the origin of such use and the possible perpetrators, whether they be State or non-State actors.

The International community has tried to deal with the use of chemical weapons in different ways. Unfortunately, the use of the veto on decisions of the United Nations Security Council has meant it has not been possible to take the institutional path to respond to those crimes, particularly in the Syrian Arab Republic, and to punish the perpetrators.

As an international community, we must not allow those responsible for these events to go unpunished. Therefore, we encourage the States Parties to the Convention that still lack national legislation in this regard, to fully implement the Convention, so that the perpetrators of these crimes are held accountable.

Various attempts have been made to respond to these atrocities. Mexico considers that it is through the existing international institutional frameworks, such as this Conference, that we must respond with determination to the use of chemical weapons. Therefore, Mexico



supported the holding of this Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, to explore ways, within the Convention's framework, that allow for the full implementation of the provisions of the Convention. This includes responsibilities to identify State and non-State perpetrators that use such weapons, so that their actions can be analysed by the competent multilateral bodies and mechanisms, thus avoiding impunity.

We deem it of the utmost importance that States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention strive to strictly comply with the provisions of the Convention and the relevant decisions taken by the Executive Council and the Conference of the States Parties, strengthen the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), its Technical Secretariat and the executive actions of its Director-General, and promote, as far as possible, decision-making by consensus in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. In this sense, we recognise the work of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW and its Director-General, which ensure the States Parties have this legal framework.

Mexico also supports and welcomes initiatives aimed at strengthening the structure of the OPCW so that it can attribute responsibility to State and non-State actors involved in attacks with chemical weapons. In this context, it is important to point out that the proposed power of the Technical Secretariat, under the leadership of its Director-General, to identify such State and non-State actors should not constitute work of a ministerial nature, determining presumed individual criminal responsibilities, but should rather be limited to being part of the technical actions carried out by Fact-Finding Missions or special missions that were created in accordance with the Convention itself.

The foregoing initiative will undoubtedly strengthen the capabilities of the OPCW and the international community to prevent the resurgence of the use of chemical weapons. The Government of Mexico has great interest in this negotiation process, because it believes it will strengthen the current conventional regime. However, we reiterate the need to ensure full respect for the Convention, the mandate of the OPCW and its established procedures.

The existence of weapons of mass destruction, their dangerous and the indiscriminate nature, the harmful and lasting impact that their use implies, and the irreversible consequences they have for the health of humans, animals and plants, in ecosystems and communities, mean they pose one of the greatest risks for international peace and security.

The reports that confirm the use of chemical weapons in recent years make it imperative to fully implement the Convention, in order to achieve general and complete disarmament and prevent the use and proliferation of toxic chemical substances in an absolute manner. We hope that during this special session, in a constructive spirit, in a genuine and committed manner, all States will make their best effort to reach the necessary agreements that will lead to the complete elimination of these weapons. This will make a significant contribution to the forging of a common front in the defence of existing multilateral legal instruments, while promoting assistance and cooperation, not only to respond reactively to attacks with chemical agents, but also to support the improvement of national capacities with a view to preventing any act that goes against the objectives of the Convention.

For Mexico, multilateralism, and the institutional architecture that has been consolidated around it, is the ideal means to achieve a more just and secure world and a sustainable peace. Given that the use of chemical weapons constitutes a war crime and a threat to international

peace and security, States must unite around initiatives that allow, through international bodies, for the clarification of facts and the identification of those responsible.

We hope that this Conference will end up adopting a strengthened mechanism of attribution regarding the development, production, stockpiling, use or inducement to the use of chemical weapons by State and non-State actors. In this regard, the powers of the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat should be clearly defined, as should their coordination with the political bodies of the Organisation.

It should be recalled that the OPCW has proved to be one of the most solid and effective pillars of the international architecture of disarmament and non-proliferation. Its proven effectiveness, the technical advantages and experience it has acquired, and the important role it had, together with the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), in the identification of those responsible for these events and bringing them to justice, should not be dismissed.

Thank you very much.

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