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**VENEZUELA**

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE NON-ALIGNED  
MOVEMENT THAT ARE STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS  
CONVENTION AND CHINA  
DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HAIFA AISSAMI MADAH  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF  
VENEZUELA AT THE EIGHTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China (NAM States Parties and China).

At the outset I would like to congratulate and welcome you back, Ambassador Odette Melono of Cameroon as Chairperson of the Executive Council and express my confidence in your able leadership to steer the sessions of the Council during your chairmanship to successful conclusions.

Since this is the first statement delivered by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the NAM States Parties and China, I would like to thank the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H. E. Alireza Jahangiri, for his dedication and fully fledged efforts to coordinate the Non-aligned Movement and China in the OPCW.

The NAM States Parties and China associate themselves with the Final Document and Margarita Declaration of the 17th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement held on 13–18 September 2016 in Margarita Island, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

We express our thanks to the Director-General, H. E. Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for his informative and comprehensive report delivered in this session and appreciate his continuous efforts and his team in the Technical Secretariat to promote further the role of the Organisation in the international disarmament regime and to carry out its functions under the Convention.

The NAM States Parties and China while committed to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Convention which is essential for the realisation of the objectives and purposes of the Convention, acknowledge that the implementation of the Convention will contribute to the international and regional peace and security.



The existence of weapons of mass destruction continues to pose a threat to international peace and security. Consequently, the NAM States Parties and China reiterate their long-standing principled position toward the achievement of general and complete disarmament, under strict and effective international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction in line with the first paragraph of the preamble of the Convention.

The NAM States Parties and China continue to underline that the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as a weapon anywhere by anyone and under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the provisions of the Convention and all norms of international law. We also affirm that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.

The NAM States Parties and China stress that the total destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles, old chemical weapons and abandoned chemical weapons, is a fundamental pillar of the Convention.

Noting with serious concern that the final extended deadline (29 April 2012) for the destruction of chemical weapons was not met by certain possessor States Parties, the NAM States Parties and China stress that the destruction of chemical weapons is the fundamental and top priority of the Organisation and urge all possessor States Parties to take all necessary measures to ensure their compliance with the provisions of the Convention and relevant decisions adopted by the policy-making organs.

We also wish to emphasise the determination expressed by the Third Review Conference that the destruction of all categories of chemical weapons, namely old chemical weapons, abandoned chemical weapons and chemical weapons stockpiles shall be completed in the shortest possible time in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and its Annex on Implementation and Verification, and with the full application of the relevant decisions adopted by the policy-making organs.

On the Draft Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2017, we wish to recognise the Director-General for proposing a draft budget based on a zero nominal growth and we value the work done by the Technical Secretariat and facilitators in order to achieve a balanced budget among the different programmes of the OPCW. It is worth mentioning that the budget for 2017 consists of a light decrease compared to last year's budget without affecting the overall work of the Organisation, and which takes into account the economic realities that States Parties are currently facing. The Budget proposal reflects the importance given to international cooperation and assistance as well as the commitments of the States Parties in this regard.

The NAM States Parties and China attach great importance to the universality of the Convention. In this regard, we hereby strongly call on remaining States not Party to the Convention to accede to it without further delay and preconditions. We also emphasise that states remaining outside the Convention should not be able to take advantage of any of the benefits it offers to the States Parties.

The NAM States Parties and China welcome the complete destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons and the significant progress made in the destruction of its chemical weapons

production facilities, and also welcome the continued cooperation of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the implementation of the relevant Executive Council decisions towards the elimination of its chemical weapons. In this regard, we recall the decisions of the Executive Council at its meetings with respect to the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons and we look forward to the destruction of the remaining hangar.

We also welcome the continued cooperation existing between the Syrian Government and the OPCW and the Director-General in implementing the Executive Council's decision EC-81/DEC.4 (dated 23 March 2016) in addressing the issues identified by the Technical Secretariat in the report on the work of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), regarding the initial Syrian declaration and related submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic EC-81/HP/DG.1, dated 22 February 2016. In this regard, three rounds of consultations with senior officials have been convened (two at the OPCW Headquarters in The Hague, and one in Damascus).

We acknowledge the continued cooperation existing between the Syrian Arab Republic and the OPCW and the progress which they achieved on all issues. The NAM States Parties and China welcome the announcement that the Syrian Arab Republic has provided the Technical Secretariat, as an outcome of their discussions, a note verbale dated 27 June 2016 with a letter from the National Authority, attaching additional information and Declarations, which will be used to amend and supplement the initial Syrian declaration, regarding all pending issues aimed at resolving them. We take note and welcome the subsequent communications exchanged between the Syrian Arab Republic and Technical Secretariat.

We received the latest information from the Technical Secretariat on the work of the DAT and we encourage both the Syrian Arab Republic and the OPCW to continue cooperation in fulfilling the mandate of the DAT in line with the Chemical Weapons Convention.

On the work done so far by the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), as well as its reports, we expect that the approach followed by the FFM teams would be uniform and consistent to continue studying all available information relating to the use of chemical weapons in Syrian Arab Republic. And we take note of the ongoing work of the FFM in Syria to investigate the incident occurred on 2 August 2016 in Aleppo and other incidents.

Furthermore, the NAM States Parties and China take note of the work done so far by the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) and look forward to receiving its final report. We expect that the JIM will conduct its mission in a professional, objective and impartial manner and we look forward to close collaboration between the United Nations and the OPCW.

The NAM States Parties and China attach great importance to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of Article XI and emphasise the need to speed up efforts in this regard.

We are convinced that the adoption of an action plan for the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI is paramount and cannot be excluded. We welcome the efforts made by the Technical Secretariat to enhance the implementation of Article XI, and we believe that this requires continuous collaboration between the Technical Secretariat and the States Parties. We believe that a systematic approach to the full and effective implementation of Article XI is a necessity, in this regard we appreciate the efforts

by the Technical Secretariat and State Parties in organising a review and evaluation workshop on 22 November in a view to identifying gaps and obstacles in order to pave the ways for an integrated, systematic and long-term approach to the effective implementation of Article XI. The participation of experts from National Authorities is imperative to the success of this workshop.

We also underline that the following elements should be taken into consideration by the policy-making organs of the Organisation, inter alia:

- (a) Allocation of adequate financial and human resources in annual Programme and Budget of the Organisation for the implementation of Article XI related programmes and initiatives within the Technical Secretariat;
- (b) Adoption of necessary actions or decisions to implement the relevant recommendations of the Third Review Conference regarding Article XI; and
- (c) Promotion of international cooperation for the benefit of States Parties through the transfer of technology, material and equipment for peaceful purposes in the chemical field and removal of any discriminatory restrictions such as unilateral sanctions against other States Parties that are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Convention and affect the Convention's long-term viability and have an adverse impact on the existing trust among the States Parties.

While paying due respect to all chemical weapons victims and their families, the NAM States Parties and China, in light of the decision adopted by the Conference of the States Parties at its Sixteenth Session (C-16/DEC.13, dated 2 December 2011), appreciate the States Parties and the Director-General who contributed to the Trust Fund for the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons. We welcome the activities of the Network and encourage the States Parties to contribute to its Voluntary Trust Fund.

The NAM States Parties and China encourage the States Parties with the capacity to facilitate and make materials and equipment-related assistance available to other States Parties and to assist and support the victims of chemical weapons, with no undue restrictions.

On the follow-up of the Third Review Conference recommendations, the NAM States Parties and China believe that the transparent, holistic and balanced approach shall prevail for implementation of these recommendations. In this context, selective approaches shall be prevented. We recall that the Matrix was developed as a mechanism to comprehensively monitor the implementation of the Third Review Conference recommendations. The NAM States Parties and China, therefore, welcome the update on the progress made by the Technical Secretariat.

The NAM States Parties and China reemphasise that the employment of personnel in the Technical Secretariat is to be fair and transparent and stress that in accordance with Article VIII, paragraph 44, of the Convention, the paramount consideration in the employment of the staff shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity. It is imperative to ensure that the Technical Secretariat observe an equitable geographical and balanced gender representation, particularly at the professional level.

With regard to the future priorities of the Organisation, the NAM States Parties and China believe that the main focus of the Organisation should remain the complete elimination of all categories of chemical weapons. We will take active part in the discussions to be held in this regard from a constructive position, with a strong belief that all pillars of the Convention would be treated in a balanced manner, including the ones related to international cooperation, assistance and protection issues, amongst others.

We strongly support dealing comprehensively and holistically with issues related to the future of the Organisation and firmly believe that the discussions need to be brought within the parameters of the policy-making organs guided and driven by States Parties inside the OPCW with a view to producing binding decisions to be adopted.

We welcome the establishment of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW, to discuss and formulate a document in this regard in order to be adopted at the Fourth Review Conference. We reiterate the importance of this Working Group and encourage its close cooperation with all regional groups. We appreciate the efforts by the Co-Chairs in formulating the methods and programme of work, and encourage them to continue cooperation with all States Parties.

The NAM States Parties and China commend the continuation of the work of the Chairpersons of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors. We take note of the latest report presented by the Chairperson of the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors referring to what the OPCW is doing within the framework of the Convention to strengthen its capabilities in the field of prevention and responses. We also take note of the diverse views on this issue and encourage further consultations.

The NAM States Parties and China are deeply concerned about reports on the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals in terrorist attacks and condemn the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups against civilians in Syria and call upon the Technical Secretariat to investigate all reports on the use of chemical weapons and keep the States Parties informed about steps taken.

The NAM States Parties and China condemn the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups in Iraq against the civilians of the city of Taza, Iraqi armed forces and Peshmerga, and we are deeply concerned by the threats of the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups.

The NAM States Parties and China express its deep satisfaction following the announcement made by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, confirming the successful removal of precursors chemicals from Libya, on 27 August 2016, as part of an ongoing operation undertaken in close collaboration with the Libyan National Authority, to verifiably eliminate remaining chemical weapons stocks, in line with the obligation of Libya pursuant to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We express our relief at the timely removal of the precursor chemicals, particularly in light of the current situation in the country and the risk that such material could be used for terrorist purposes and any other prohibited activities under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We strongly commend the efforts of the Libyan authorities and OPCW in achieving this milestone and also expressed thanks and appreciation to the members of the international

community that have provided technical expertise, operational support and financial resources towards this end.

NAM States Parties and China note with gratitude the Director-General's Note, (EC-83/DG.15 C-21/DG.13, dated 15 September 2016) , on the Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention, also known as the Africa Programme. We note that this has been a signature undertaking in which the OPCW has been engaging African States Parties in order to achieve the Convention's objectives.

NAM States Parties and China further note that since its inception, the Director-General has reported to the relevant policy-making organs of the OPCW of the new initiatives, activities, events, and progress made by the Technical Secretariat in the delivery of the African Programme and the positive impact it continues to have to the various African Member States of the Chemical Weapons Convention. NAM States Parties and China would like to see the African Programme continue in an appropriate, efficient, equitable and sustainable manner as this will lead to, among other benefits, an increased capacity of African States Parties to fully implement the provisions of the Convention.

NAM States Parties and China would also like to urge the Technical Secretariat to increase budgetary allocations to the African Programme so as to ensure the programme's predictability and self-sufficiency, as this will also lead to increased and improved awareness about the significance and importance of the Chemical Weapons Convention, including rights, obligations and benefit among African Member States.

The NAM States Parties and China recognise the importance of education and outreach programmes in achieving the main objectives of the Convention, in this regard we welcome the work done by the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach. We also welcome all regional meetings held to contribute in formulating recommendations on education and outreach.

NAM States Parties and China would like to express deep regret with the non-adoption of the report of Eighty-Second Session of the Executive Council due to lack of consensus on important issues. The extensive work of members of the council on other important issues of the OPCW should not be ignored. We, therefore urge the members of the council to work cooperatively to achieve consensus and successful ending of the present session and adopt a report, as is a tradition of the Organisation.

The NAM States Parties and China reaffirm the importance of upholding the principles set out in the Convention, and the necessity for fulfilling the mandate of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, call on all States Parties to refrain from proposing any action that do not fall in the scope of mandate of the OPCW, and do not polarise or politicise its work and do not create precedence that would undermine the future work of the Organisation.

Finally, The NAM States Parties and China encourage all members of the Executive Council to work together in keeping the unity of the Council and to speak with one voice that led to successful outcome, in complex issues, under very difficult circumstances. Thank you.