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CUBA

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

Madam Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

The Cuban delegation congratulates the Director-General on the occasion of this, his first Executive Council Session and, at the same time, wishes to reiterate Cuba's support to his tenure.

Cuba welcomes the State of Palestine as a new member of the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as to the OPCW family.

Madam Chairperson,

In the complex current international scenario, Cuba once again speaks out on the urgent need to achieve progress towards the general and complete disarmament, under strict and effective international control, including the prohibition and total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, and among them, the chemical weapons.

Cuba advocates for the OPCW preserving its mandate and continuing to work to achieve the destruction of all chemical weapons and prevent their re-emergence, to encourage that achievements in the field of chemistry should be used exclusively for the benefit of mankind, and to promote free trade in chemicals, as well as international cooperation and exchange of scientific and technical information in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under this Convention, in order to enhance the economic and technological development of all States Parties.

This should be based, without a doubt, on the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of all the provisions of the Convention, as well as the balance in the implementation of all its pillars. In this regard, we call the attention to the breaches identified in the fulfillment of objectives of greater importance, such as the difficulties in complying with the deadlines for the completion of the destruction of the arsenals of the Possessor State or the heterogeneity of the levels of the national measures for the implementation of the Convention, which should be overcome as soon as possible.



Madam Chairperson,

Cuba repudiates once again the unilateral coercive measures and extraterritorial laws applied by the United States Government, under the economic, commercial, and financial blockade imposed on Cuba for almost 60 years, which not only remains intact, but intensifies.

The embargo imposed against Cuba constitutes a violation of the Convention, in particular of Article XI, given that all States Parties must apply its provisions in a manner that avoids hindering the economic or technological development of the States Parties and international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for non-prohibited purposes of the Convention, including the international exchange of scientific and technical information, chemicals, and equipment for the production, processing, or use of chemical products.

Next 31 October, Cuba will submit for the twenty-seventh consecutive time to the General Assembly of the United Nations, the resolution entitled “Necessity of Ending the Economic, Commercial and Financial Embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”.

Madam Chairperson,

The Fourth Review Conference to be held this year is the setting par excellence to address the full compliance of the Convention and reflect on future challenges.

Negative precedents that undermine the integrity of the work of the OPCW should be avoided; that is to say, the creation of speedy, non-consensual mechanisms within the Organisation, which lack a full basis and analysis by the States Parties of the consequences on the Organisation’s operational, administrative, financial, legal, on human resources and for their external links, among others. We believe it is essential, by virtue of the legitimacy, transparency, and possible constructive involvement of all States Parties, that an evaluation of and full information on the present and future impact of decision C-SS-4/DEC. 3, dated June 27, 2018, should be provided in order to advance its possible implementation.

Regarding the issues of financing and budget, while recognising the challenges the Organisation faces, and to which we are committed, we prefer to explore ways to make optimal use of existing resources, based on the continuity of the principle of zero nominal growth. We also call attention to the importance of maintaining a properly structured and balanced regular budget, covering the essential activities within the mandate of the Organisation, avoiding the excess of these tasks assumed with voluntary contributions and the creation of several long-term or of indefinite duration special funds, which weakens the necessary support for the correct implementation of the Convention by the States Parties.

The Fourth Review Conference should acknowledge that international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention is one of the pillars of the work of the OPCW, which is becoming increasingly important in the future priorities of the States Parties, which should contribute to economic and technological development in accordance with the provisions of Article XI. To this end, the States Parties should begin a debate in the policy-making organs on a comprehensive strategy for international cooperation activities, in order to preserve the integrity and credibility of the OPCW.

The Fourth Review Conference should move towards the creation of a system to evaluate the impact of capacity development activities. The demand for planning and evaluation of development activities, through logical frameworks and the establishment of indicators, is an international reality, a very useful tool to measure the impact of activities, to debate the results within the OPCW and to elaborate clear goals in this essential function of the Organisation to promote the full, effective, and non-discriminatory compliance of all the provisions of the Convention.

In this context, the improvement of geographical and gender balance in the OPCW and in all its activities should be considered.

Madam Chairperson,

On the proposal regarding the application in the Organization of the Junior Professional Officials Programme (JPO), the Cuban delegation considers that, before its application in the OPCW, the various practical experiences on its functioning within and outside the United Nations System should be taken into account. It would be necessary for the States Parties to agree on the needed legislative framework, including the draft model agreement or memorandum of understanding for the signing of bilateral agreements between the Organisation and the donor State Party. This would prevent the creation of multiple reference criteria on the application of the Programme in the OPCW, standardise the eligibility criteria by the OPCW in the recruitment of young professionals, and prevent the prevalence of specific and differentiated requirements between the donor State Party and the Organisation in the selection process, in order to achieve a competitive, open, and transparent recruitment procedure in all cases. The Programme must take due account of the importance of hiring staff so that there is the widest possible geographic representation, as established in Paragraph 44 of Article VIII of the Convention, as well as taking into account the gender perspective.

Madam Chairperson,

The States Parties should continue to play a decisive role in the decision-making process in the OPCW policy-making organs and should not be supplanted by other actors whose role is complementary.

Thank you very much.

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