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PANAMA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR WILLYS DELVALLE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA
TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,

Please accept a cordial welcome from the delegation of Panama. We would like to begin our statement by expressing our full support for the work that will be undertaken at this session of the Executive Council.

This welcome is also extended to the Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, and the team of the Organisation who have supported his management.

The delegation of Panama would like to make a brief aside to express its recognition of the career of the Director-General of this Organisation.

We would like to emphasise the professionalism of and the work accomplished by Ambassador Üzümcü; after a long path and under his leadership, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons attained one of its great achievements, the Nobel Peace Prize, along with the entire team and with the expressed support of the States Parties. We present our gratitude for his dedication to and progress in this valuable task.

More than two decades have passed since the Chemical Weapons Convention came into force. Its multilateral nature demonstrates that it is a tool that we have adopted together, but one that we adopted to respect and implement.

Panama will reiterate as many times as necessary that it is necessary that the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention be fully respected. Our commitment to the provisions of this Convention is unwavering and irrefutable.

We firmly defend a multilateral system in complete compliance with and within the framework of international law, as it provides us with an environment conducive to the exchange of opinions and allows us to find the best possible ways to understand one another.

As a result, the multilateral system provides the conditions necessary to allow us to strengthen our efforts, identify initiatives, and broaden cooperation toward building a firm platform for maintaining international peace and security.



Within this context, we value strengthening the capacities of the National Authorities and training local teams via the cooperation that is fostered by the Technical Secretariat.

For this reason, we welcome the basic course for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for first responders in chemical emergencies, which took place in Panama City this past April; this course not only provided participants with knowledge on monitoring, detection, and decontamination activities, but also allowed them to apply their knowledge through practical exercises.

We must emphasise that it is through this cooperation that the requisite conditions are reinforced for a more robust national legislation for a greater number of possessor States, which will facilitate the full implementation of our Convention.

With regard to assistance and protection, which are equally relevant, the innovative proposals of the Technical Secretariat concerning the database and aimed at (1) improving education and collaboration, and (2) expanding organisational efficiency and operational agility are of great interest for new consultations with the States Parties, as they will lead to progress.

The Conference on Countering Chemical Terrorism this past June was very timely, and featured a broad programme with subjects of interest related to our discussions.

Now more than over the past five years—even more than over the past 20 years—we are conscious of the commitment that we have accepted under the Convention. The States Parties are obligated to comply with its provisions and we are called upon to cooperate without exception toward a world free of chemical weapons.

Before we began to see an increase in alleged incidents connected with the use of chemical weapons around the world, Panama expressed its concerns and has reiterated its condemnation of the use of chemicals as weapons by anyone, under any circumstance, which it considers to be unacceptable and deplorable.

The reports of the Fact-Finding Mission, which provide information on the potential use of chemicals as weapons, or confirm the exposure of individuals to any type of chemical weapon, are equally concerning. The delegation of Panama keeps abreast of the work of the Mission, which looks to obtain final conclusions on some cases and recognises the difficulty of doing so in other cases in which it cannot be definitively determined whether or not a specific chemical was used as a weapon.

The information that we have recently received on the alleged use of a nerve agent reaffirm the high level of gravity of these new incidents.

The delegation of Panama believes it is impossible to ignore the challenges that lie ahead of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and for that reason, they should exhaust all of the alternatives that, within the framework of the Convention, make it possible to strengthen the capacities of the Organisation.

As we approach the work ahead of us in the months to come, in addition to the preparations for the Fourth Review Conference, the Executive Council must continue to look closely at the questions concerning the future of the OPCW, which has made progress in the midst of

complex international conditions—a reality that we must confront with great resolve to move forward together to ensure that chemicals are used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

I request that this statement be considered an official document. Thank you.

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