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ECUADOR

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR FERNANDO BUCHELI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ECUADOR TO THE OPCW
AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE
OF THE STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW THE OPERATION
OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

Mr Chairperson, Ambassador Agustín Vásquez Gómez,

As the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, I would like to express my support for your success in managing the work of the Fourth Review Conference.

The delegation of Ecuador welcomes the Chairperson of the Twenty-Third Session of the Conference of the States Parties, H.E. Yun-Young Lee, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, for his skilful management of the work of the Conference, and H.E. I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia, for his effective work as Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group on Preparation for the Fourth Review Conference.

The delegation of Ecuador welcomes the appointment of H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias as Director-General of the OPCW and wishes him success in his work.

The Fourth Review Conference provides an excellent opportunity to reflect on the work that has been carried out by the Organisation over the past five years, analyse the lessons learned, identify new challenges, and set out guidelines for the future.

Among the recognitions of the OPCW over the past five years, the Nobel Peace Prize stands out, awarded in late 2013 for the Organisation's valiant efforts to eliminate chemical weapons and promote peace and international cooperation.

In the last five years, there have been changes in the field of international security, such as the threat of the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors, chemical terrorism, the use of nerve agents, and cyberattacks; these will have to be addressed by the OPCW.

Ecuador firmly believes that the prohibition and total elimination of chemical weapons should continue to be the principle priorities of this Organisation. We must recognise that a great deal of progress has been made since the Third Review Conference. Nevertheless, we must insist on the need to redouble the efforts to eliminate the chemical weapons of one possessor State to ensure that it fulfils the commitments undertaken by the agreed deadlines.



Additionally, we call for the continued destruction and verification of abandoned chemical weapons and note the need to ensure that the four States that are not yet party to the Convention accede as soon as possible.

The threats facing the international community related to the use of chemical weapons are increasingly evident and frequent. Ecuador firmly believes that there is no justification for the use of chemical weapons or chemicals as weapons anywhere, by anyone, or under any circumstance; we affirm that the use of said weapons is completely contradictory to the provisions of the Convention, legal norms, and the standards of the international community.

In this new international context, Ecuador believes it is fundamental to work collaboratively in order to establish the mechanisms of prevention of and response to any potential re-emergence and use of chemical weapons, with respect for the principles of the Convention.

Likewise, we support the construction of new facilities for the OPCW Laboratory, as well as strengthening the network of designated laboratories, and we aspire to having a laboratory in the Latin American and Caribbean region in the future.

Ecuador aligned itself with the joint document issued in late 2016 on the use of chemical aerosol incapacitants as riot control agents and we reiterate the need to continue the discussions on this matter in order to achieve effective implementation.

The delegation of Ecuador values and supports the continued work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and its Sub-Working Group on non-State Actors. Additionally, we support the establishment of the Rapid Response and Assistance Mission, which seeks to assist States Parties affected by incidents of alleged use of toxic chemicals by non-State actors.

My delegation supports and welcomes the efforts that the Technical Secretariat is carrying out in the field of cooperation related to Articles VII, X, and XI. With new challenges facing the OPCW, it is indispensable that the National Authorities and national capacities be strengthened.

With regard to Article VII, my delegation notes the necessity of adopting an integral approach for national implementation, which takes into account the constitutional requirements of each State Party and ensures that implementation measures are aligned with the Convention.

With regard to Article XI, concerning capacity building in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited by the Convention, we support work aimed at obtaining tangible results in the near future.

Concerning the decision adopted by the Conference at its Fourth Special Session, which took place in June 2018, Ecuador believes it is necessary to identify the organisers of and those responsible for the use of chemical weapons, in light of the positive aspects of the work carried out by the Fact-Finding Mission and the Joint Investigative Mechanism. In the case of the Attribution Team, it is necessary to develop a mandate that will produce legitimate results and help avoid any polarisation of positions within the Organisation.

In terms of the OPCW's budget, my delegation is in favour of allocating the necessary resources to the Organisation for the adequate implementation of its mandate. Nevertheless, Ecuador's position, at this and other international organisations, is based on the past years of zero-nominal growth, taking into account the financial restrictions facing some countries. It is for this reason that Ecuador urges taking a rational approach to expenditures via the effective and synergetic management of the Organisation, with the objective of fulfilling its mandate.

As regards the OPCW's human resources, it is necessary to provide the Organisation with flexibility to preserve the continuity of knowledge of and experience with technical matters; at the same time, it is important for the OPCW to have new personnel with innovative ideas and to take into account gender and geographical balance. It is for this reason that Ecuador is in favour of continuing the discussion on this issue through a working group, with the aim of identifying the Organisation's needs and making the necessary changes.

Finally, Mr Chairperson, Ecuador is certain that this Conference will meet the objective of guiding the Organisation toward the fulfilment of its mandate in the next five years, bearing in mind the past achievements and the challenges that it currently faces, with a view to having a solid Organisation that will continue its mission of supporting the preservation of world peace.

I request that this statement be considered an official document of the Fourth Review Conference and published on the Organisation's website.

Thank you.

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