



OPCW

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VENEZUELA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HAIFA AISSAMI MADAH
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC
OF VENEZUELA TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-SECOND SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr. Chairperson,
Excellencies,
distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to deliver this Statement on behalf of Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

My Country as a Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China endorses and fully subscribes to the declaration that I had the honour of carrying out yesterday on behalf of our Movement.

On behalf of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, I would like to welcome you, Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki of Morocco, as the Chairperson of the Twenty-Second Session of the Conference of the States Parties, and express our confidence in your able leadership to steer this conference to a successful conclusion.

We also wish to take this opportunity to appreciate the Chairperson of the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties, Ambassador Dr Christoph Israng of Germany, for all his dedicated efforts during the Twenty-First Session.

We express our thanks to the Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, for his informative and comprehensive report delivered at this session and appreciate his continued efforts and those of 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. We also wish to take this opportunity to appreciate you, Ambassador Üzümcü, for your contribution and dedicated efforts during eight years of invaluable work in service of the Organisation.

Venezuela would like to congratulate the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism of African Union based in Algiers, Algeria, and the International Master Courses in Protection Against Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and explosive Events at the University of Rome Tor Vergata, as joint recipients of the 2017 OPCW–The Hague Award.



Venezuela continues 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, legal norms and standards of the international community. We also reaffirm that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.

Venezuela expresses their deep concern regarding the attempt to accuse States Parties of using chemical weapons on the basis of unsubstantiated allegations made by media reports or other open sources, including non-governmental entities. This trend can cause a dangerous precedent in the future work of the OPCW.

Venezuela welcomes the completion of the full destruction of the Chemical Weapons Stockpile possessed by the Russian Federation under OPCW Verification.

Venezuela welcomes the visit by a delegation of representatives of the Executive Council and the Director-General, headed by the Executive Council Chairperson, to Haerbaling abandoned chemical weapons destruction site, China, from 12 to 16 June 2017. We believe such visits help the Council to obtain better understanding of the Abandoned Chemical Weapons issue. We hope that the Conference and the Council will pay further attention to assist in the process of the destruction of the Abandoned Chemical Weapons.

Recalling the decisions of the Executive Council with respect to the elimination and destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons, and the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons production facilities, Venezuela welcomes the substantive efforts made and progress achieved in this regard. We look forward to the continuation of a successful cooperation existing between the OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic on all issues.

With regard to the appointment of the new Director-General, the Venezuela extend their warm felicitations and good wishes to Ambassador Fernando Arias of Spain on his unanimous recommendation by the Executive Council for the position of Director-General of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW. We also take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks and profound appreciation to the other six candidates for their spirit of flexibility leading to the consensus and the success of this process. Herewith we appreciate the role of the Executive Council Chairperson, Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal of Bangladesh, for leading this process in an open, transparent manner.

Venezuela wishes to refer the upcoming elections of the of Members of the Executive Council during the Twenty-Second Session of the Conference of the States Parties to be held tomorrow 29 November , according with the Rule 79 of the Rules of Procedure.

Venezuela is a proud member of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, and has currently the honour the serve as its Chair. Our country wishes to continue with the tradition of our predecessors that have served as members of the Executive Council while leading the Movement.

Venezuela is one of the large contributors of the Organisation and the fourth contributor in Latin America and the Caribbean, highlighting the prominence of its chemical industry; furthermore, our country is the first in the region to have a mission separately accredited to the OPCW, emphasising the importance that our country awards to multilateralism in general, and to this Organisation in particular.

Venezuela had the honour to be a member of the Executive Council for a single term from 1998 to 2000, since when it has not been part of this important body of the OPCW.

Venezuela has endorsed all GRULAC's countries, which have been part of the Executive Council throughout these 20 years, it is from the beginning of the Organisation. To be explicit, to Peru 19 times continuously from the start of the Executive Council, to Chile 16 times, to Panama 10 times, and Guatemala 6 times, all in this moment members of the Executive Council. The Principle of Reciprocity has been fulfilled by Venezuela beyond any doubt.

The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has submitted its nomination to serve as a Member of the Executive Council for the period 2018 — 2020 in representation of the Latin-American and Caribbean Group, GRULAC. There are four (4) elective seats.

This nomination is based upon the principles of rotation and reciprocity which enshrines the right of each State Party to serve as Member of the Executive Council in accordance with Article VIII, paragraph 23 of the Convention.

Unfortunately, after three months of meetings, it has not been possible to reach consensus in our regional group in this opportunity due to foreign political interference brought to our group by some members of it.

Now we are going to explain why the consensus had not reached and is almost improbable.

We would like to inform that in our regional group there are currently five candidates to the Executive Council seats. Chile, Panama, Guatemala, Peru, and Venezuela.

Chile, Panama, Guatemala, and Peru, along with a country from another regional group are part of The Lima Agreement. In this “Agreement” in its point 12, those countries agree to: “Our decision not to support any Venezuelan candidature put forward to regional and international organisations and mechanisms.” (Please Check Annex)

From at least one month ago, Venezuela has been asking to our Group Coordinator to communicate to this Conference that there is not agreement in GRULAC for the Executive Council seats, but none of our official requests were answered. We don't have any other option to address directly to the Conference. In addition, the Coordinator of our Regional Group, Panama, is at the same time part of the Lima Agreement and a candidate to an Executive Council seat. The conflict of interest is evident.

Our region is affected by interference from outside the Regional Group and they want to bring this to our Organisation.

It is not our country that has broken the principle of reciprocity; it is not our country that assumes an inflexible position.

It is never asked who has not exercised a right, that remains outside, that shows flexibility; it seems more logical that who has exercised his right, for many years and continuously as here has happened, step aside, so that who has not been able to exercise his right can do so.

Venezuela kindly requests your attention regarding to the election of the GRULAC seats according the Agenda Item 12, Nominations for the Members of the Executive Council.

In this regard, we kindly ratify our request to make the duly arrangement according with the election procedures contemplates under Rule 79 of the Rules of Procedure. In order to carry out the voting process on time, as schedule in the Agenda without any delay.

Venezuela reaffirms the necessity of upholding the principles set out in the Convention and call upon all States Parties not to polarise or politicise the work of the Organisation. We encourage the States Parties to work cooperatively to achieve consensus and successful conclusion of the present session.

Thank you.

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