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PANAMA

**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC
OF PANAMA TO THE OPCW AT THE EIGHTY-NINTH SESSION
OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,

The delegation of Panama wishes to convey its compliments and welcomes you and the distinguished members of the Executive Council (“the Council”); we reiterate our support and wish you success in the work you will be leading.

Please allow us to begin this statement by welcoming Ambassador Fernando Arias, the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, to his first session of the Council; as States Parties, we have entrusted him with a task of great responsibility.

We are conscious that at this present juncture, prudence is required of all of us. But we place our trust in the good work of the Director-General at the head of this Organisation. Likewise, we welcome the detailed report that he presented during his opening statement.

We acknowledge the entire team of the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) with the certainty that our delegation is prepared to collaborate toward strengthening this Organisation and firmly cementing the objective of ensuring full compliance with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”).

We welcome the publication of the recent statement by the OPCW spokesperson regarding cyber security in relation to an operation targeted against the Organisation, we note that the Secretariat is developing measures to mitigate these activities, and we highlight the serious concern stemming from these incidents. These situations are absolutely part of the challenges that lie ahead for this Organisation and they must be treated with due seriousness.

As we outline our vision of the future, we maintain a spirit of collaboration within the context of the meetings of the Open-Ended Working Group for Preparation of the Fourth Review Conference, which is working on an exhaustive agenda.

It is essential that we recognize H.E. Ambassador I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja of Indonesia for his work and his dedication as the Chairperson of this Group. It is equally important to explore opportunities to facilitate constructive, reflective dialogues that help bridge the gaps among the diverse positions of the delegations, such as the recent retreat for Ambassadors.



Panama has been able to make gradual progress in terms of national legislation, which is why we share the optimistic view that the initiatives related to the implementation of Article VII and supported by the Organisation will lead to more efficient adoption of standards aligned with the Convention.

International cooperation is, without a doubt, a key tool with regard to the Articles of the Convention, which promote the capacity-building activities of the Secretariat in and which clearly complement the cooperation received from the States Parties. We thank the facilitators of the different working groups.

The Organisation took a decisive step at the Fourth Special Session of the Conference, and we welcome with our full attention information from the Director-General on the progress made in implementing decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 regarding the way in which the threat of the use of chemical weapons will be confronted. We call for making greater efforts toward reaching a better understanding.

The Notes by the Director-General on “Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme” and “The state of implementation of decision EC-83/DEC.5”, among others, show that there is still work to be done.

The Organisation that we want to strengthen from day to day requires excellent, motivated, and committed human resources, as well as an analysis of adequate and appropriate conditions guaranteeing that the Organisation functions effectively. This is not an easy task; it is a constant and continuous challenge, particularly when the international arena has changed after nearly 20 years since the first set of Staff Regulations.

Within this context, we welcome the need to recognise the importance of gender parity as a personnel policy and in the Secretariat’s recruitment policy, in alignment with the best practices of other international organisations. Panama is strongly committed to and has national legislation in place for this.

The delegation of Panama, which offered its strong willingness to facilitate the establishment of the Advisory Board for Education and Outreach three years ago, values the fact that during this period, it has evolved considerably to the point of developing the most practical tools such as the brochure that will be published and will serve as a reference for the educational activities of the States Parties.

Times and perceptions are changing, but today more than ever we need a robust multilateral system and predominant respect for international standards. The progress made should be preserved, strengthened, and cemented, particularly in our case, the Convention, the first disarmament treaty negotiated with a completely multilateral framework, and in favour of greater transparency and its implementation by all States Parties equally.

Panama cannot do more than reiterate that any use of chemicals as weapons, by anyone and under any circumstances, is unacceptable.

I request that this statement be considered an official document.

Thank you.