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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 EIGHTY-NINTH SESSION  
OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson, Excellencies, and Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to once again welcome you at the head of the Executive Council at this Eighty-Ninth Session and assure you of our delegation's commitment to working in a dedicated manner for the common goals of our Organisation.

Likewise, I would like to thank Ambassador Fernando Arias for his exhaustive and complete report; we welcome and congratulate him as the new Director-General and, together with the Technical Secretariat, we assure him that he will have the support of our delegation for working from a constructive and proactive stance and in the interest of the prestige and credibility of this Organisation.

Venezuela aligns itself with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement and China; I had the honour of reading this statement today at the start of general debate, and in this regard, I would like to highlight some of those points in our national capacity.

Our country, as a State Party to the Convention, fully complies with all of the obligations thereunder. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela does not possess, produce, or stockpile chemical weapons and reiterates its strongest possible condemnation of the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as weapons anywhere, by anyone, and under any circumstances; we firmly believe that sooner or later, those who have committed such atrocious acts will be held accountable for their crimes under law.

This Organisation has achieved many objectives within the framework of our Convention. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that we must persist toward achieving full universality, as this continues to be an ongoing issue to which we are decidedly committed. In this regard, Venezuela reiterates its heartfelt welcome to the delegation of the State of Palestine as State Party number 193, joining the community of the nations of the Convention; without a doubt, this constitutes an important step toward the universality to which we aspire.

Venezuela advocates for compliance with and implementation of all of the pillars of the Convention in an effective and non-discriminatory manner. For this reason, it is important to pool our efforts, not only in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation of these weapons of mass destruction, but also to assign, in a balanced manner, equal importance to the areas of cooperation, the transfer of technology for purposes not prohibited by the Convention, and



recruitment and training, which will make it possible for the States to strengthen their national capacities.

Once again, our country reiterates its concern surrounding the distorted practice via which, in light of false allegations, the use or alleged use of chemical weapons or toxic chemicals as weapons in the territory of a State Party is signalled based on rumours, speculation, or simply information spread on social media, by the media, or by non-governmental organisations declaring themselves to be representatives of civil society, without conducting an investigation that is technical or seriously scientific in nature and, consequently, completely lacking in credibility. The surge of these practices is absolutely unacceptable and should bring us to reflect on those who echo them.

Likewise, my delegation wishes to address some considerations regarding the draft budget for 2019. To date, the Organisation has developed its work efficiently. In recent years, it has been able to progress substantially toward its goal of destroying the chemical weapons stockpiles possessed by States Parties, to the point that today, there is only one possessor State left. This progress has been achieved without any significant budgetary variations. For this reason, we are concerned by the proposed draft budget, which includes a considerable increase for the year ahead without the intention of expanding international cooperation and assistance programmes. We are speaking about Article XI.

Even more alarming is the intention to increase the 2019 budget in order to establish a “temporary office” usurping the competencies of the United Nations Security Council, approved via an illegitimate decision, based on an erroneous legal interpretation that led to an amendment to the Convention by means of a decision made at a Special Session of the Conference and approved by a vote of fewer than half of the States Parties.

In summary, we can conclude that the lack of a consensus on the proposed 2019 draft budget reflects the illegitimacy of the decision adopted by the Special Session of the Conference this past June; its origin is illegitimate as it was essentially inserted in contradiction to the procedures for entering amendments set out in the Convention itself; it is illegitimate in its scope as it goes beyond the letter and the spirit of the Convention; and finally, it is illegitimate in terms of its implementation, because it was approved by a vote of fewer than half of the States Parties that form this Organisation.

I request that this statement be considered an official document of this session and published on the website of the Organisation.

Thank you.