



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Fourth Special Session
26 and 27 June 2018

C-SS-4/NAT.54
27 June 2018
ENGLISH and SPANISH only

VENEZUELA

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

EXPLANATION OF VOTE

Mr Chairperson,

Our country welcomes the opportunity that we have been given to explain the meaning of the negative vote that we just cast with regard to the draft decision submitted for a vote, and which has just been approved.

In this regard, our country would like to put on the record the reasons behind this decision.

Venezuela, as a State Party to the OPCW, has carried out and continues to carry out in full its obligations under the Convention; in this regard, our country does not possess, produce, or stockpile chemical weapons and categorically condemns in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as weapons, anywhere, by anyone, and under any circumstances; we firmly believe that the perpetrators behind these criminal atrocities must be held accountable under the law for their actions.

Venezuela firmly believes that the OPCW is an organisation that is exclusively technical in nature and finds it to be fundamental to preserve the nature in which it was conceived.

The draft decision submitted by the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, together with other delegations, exceeds the limits of the field of disarmament. In the event that it is adopted, as regrettably just took place, by a vote and not by consensus, it could lead to a dangerous situation in which the mandate of an international organisation is broadly interpreted with prejudice to the exclusive prerogatives of the United Nations Security Council.

Furthermore, such a decision will set a dangerous precedent for the way in which the OPCW operates, since—without meeting the requisite to introduce amendments to the Convention and following the corresponding procedures—this is being done de facto, which without a doubt will undermine and erode the authority and integrity of the Chemical Weapons Convention.



We cannot rule out that in future, a certain group of countries would be tempted to assign an “attribution function” to other international structures in a similar manner, or to attempt to legitimise, without the consent of the United Nations Security Council, coercive, unilateral, and illicit measures against any State whose politics do not suit them for whatever reason.

For these reasons, Venezuela has voted no on the draft decision presented by the United Kingdom and supported by other countries. In this regard, we would like to highlight that this decision was adopted by a vote that lacks legitimacy for at least two reasons: the first is the way in which it was done, which, as we have noted, is an amendment to the Convention that is being made underhandedly and in contradiction to the procedures set out in the Convention itself; the second has to do with the number of countries that voted in favour of this draft decision: 82 countries. That is fewer than half of the number of total countries—193 States Parties to the Convention, to be exact. This is without a doubt an important factor that must be considered for the future.

Mr Chairperson, I would kindly request that this statement be considered an official document of this special session of the Conference and published on the Organisation’s website.

Thank you for your attention.

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