



OPCW

Executive Council

Eighty-Fourth Session
7 – 9 March 2017

EC-84/NAT.35
8 March 2017
ENGLISH and SPANISH only

VENEZUELA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR H.E. HAIFA AISSAMI MADAH
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I would like to begin my statement by expressing our deepest condolences to the delegation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands regarding the unfortunate passing of Ambassador Jan-Lucas van Hoorn, and to his family, friends, and colleagues. We give you our support and our hearts.

As we again welcome this Executive Council, I would like to voice on behalf of my delegation our gratitude for and recognition of the major efforts that you, Your Excellency Odette Melono, Ambassador of Cameroon, have been making as you oversee our work. Your professionalism and leadership have been a driving force as we tackled great complexity and challenging circumstances, which you were able to overcome as last year came to a close.

I would also like to express our gratitude to Director-General Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for his report; we commend his efforts and the efforts of his team in the Technical Secretariat aimed at promoting the role of the Organisation even further within the international disarmament regime under the Convention.

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to reiterate that my country's commitment to the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of all of the provisions of the Convention is firm and absolute.

Furthermore, we believe that the existence of weapons of mass destruction continues to pose a threat to international peace and security. For that reason, we continue to lobby for complete and total disarmament under strict and effective international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction.

We emphasise that the use of chemical weapons and the use of toxic chemical products as weapons in any place, by anyone, and under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the provisions of the Convention and all standards of international law. We firmly believe that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.



In this regard, I would like to voice our concern about the threat of the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups and the reports of the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemical products in terrorist attacks; these actions are unquestionably unacceptable and should be vehemently condemned.

Venezuela assigns great importance to the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of all of the provisions of Article XI, and wishes to emphasise the need to accelerate efforts in this area.

We value the importance of the adoption of an action plan for the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI, and we believe that the States Parties will adopt an effective approach and concrete proposals at ongoing discussions at the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW. In this regard, we recognise the importance of the workshop that will be taking place near the end of this year as a fundamental step toward this objective. Thus, we call for the promotion of the broadest and most active participation of the States Parties in this workshop. Furthermore, we welcome the efforts carried out by the Technical Secretariat aimed at improving the implementation of Article XI and we are fully confident that this will require regular collaboration between the Technical Secretariat and the States Parties.

On another matter, we recognise the importance of the programmes in education and outreach in achieving the main goals of the Convention, and in this regard we welcome the work carried out by the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach. Likewise, we welcome all of the regional meetings held with an aim to contribute to the development of recommendations on education and outreach.

With the decisions of the Executive Council on the elimination and destruction of Syrian chemical weapons and the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons production facilities serving as a foundation, Venezuela very much welcomes the substantive efforts and progress made in these areas and we await with interest the continuation of successful and effective cooperation between the OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic.

Venezuela notes the most recent letter presented by the Director-General in relation to the Rapid Response and Assistance Team, the mechanism dedicated to carrying out the mandate of the OPCW under the Convention in terms of strengthening its capacities in protection and assistance. We wish to emphasise that this assistance should be provided only and exclusively at the request of a State Party. We believe it is of the utmost importance that the States Parties be kept informed of the emergency assistance measures under and the resources available for this initiative, as referred to by the Director-General, in full compliance with the Convention. This will keep us energised and encourage new consultations.

I would like to urge the members of the Council to work together constructively toward achieving a consensus—a fundamental principle for closing this meeting successfully—and adopting a report that accurately reflects the tradition that characterises the work of this prestigious Organisation.

I would also like to reaffirm the importance of defending the principles set out in the Convention, and the need to comply with the mandate of this Organisation. For this reason, I urge all States Parties to refrain from proposing any action that does not fall within the mandate of the OPCW.

We must redouble all of our efforts without polarising or politicising the work of this institution, which is, among other things, a highly technical entity. If we are not capable of standing strong against the temptation to put the States Parties at a crossroads at which they must choose to resort to a mechanism other than dialogue and consensus in order to adopt a decision, we will be taking a step back from the good practices and traditions established within this Organisation. This would doubtlessly set a precedent and negatively impact the Organisation's future work.

As one last comment, I would like to encourage all of the members of the Executive Council to work together in order to maintain the unity of the Council, and to speak with one united voice, thus bringing us to successful results when it comes to complex matters in very challenging circumstances.

Finally, Madam Chairperson, I would be grateful if this statement could be considered an official document of this Council and published on the Organisation's website.

Thank you for your kind attention.

--- 0 ---