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CHILE

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MARÍA TERESA INFANTE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CHILE TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETIETH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Madam Deputy Director-General,
Mr Secretary,
Distinguished Colleagues:

We begin this meeting after an intense period of work during which the substantive agenda was finalised to guide these discussions and the future decisions of the Organisation. We firmly believe that that Organisation is on the vanguard of the fight against weapons of mass destruction and serves as a transparent, inclusive, and active means of international cooperation.

We welcome the full report from the Director-General and support the invitation to share present challenges while actively maintaining the ability to respond to these challenges. This goal is concurrent with the goal expressed in the statement by the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

We attribute real importance to the proposal that this Movement has put up for consideration by the Executive Council with regard to continuing the efforts of the Fourth Review Conference toward making process in the search for agreements in situations where a consensus can be found, and prioritising these for implementation. We support the initiative to establish an Open-Ended Working Group that would have the experience and commitment of the Ambassadors of Indonesia and El Salvador.

During these months, the fight against the possession, stockpiling, and use of chemical agents as weapons in conflicts or against individuals—no matter the perpetrator—has been translated into concrete initiatives, measures, and decisions. We have participated as members of this Organisation and in the assessment thereof, supporting everything that strengthens the action and relevance of the OPCW.

We would like to highlight two areas, among others, that reflect these goals:

- We thank the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat for the measures that have been adopted to put into practice what was set out in paragraph 10 of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3, entitled “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use”, and adopted in June 2018. We welcome the appointment of Ambassador Santiago Oñate



and we are confident that under his management, the Investigation and Identification Team will fully adjust to its mandate in line with the current standards and in a professional way. The relevance of the Convention when it comes to the use of chemicals as weapons in the circumstances upon which this decision is based remains valid.

- Likewise, we appreciate the cooperation with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, and we believe that information should be shared by those in possession of it. This collaboration does not convert the OPCW into a tribunal, nor does it supersede its attributions under the Convention. It does, however, provide a sense of effectiveness to the provisions of the Convention with regard to events that have put its principles and competencies at risk.

The proposals to ensure that the Technical Secretariat is able to have the capacities it needs, thus strengthening the personal abilities and technical skills of those collaborating on relevant tasks, have our full support.

On a similar note, we maintain the urgency of issues concerning an open and transparent recruitment policy, the creation and retention of competencies related to the development of investigations into alleged use, and chemical security and protection, as well as other areas that fall within the purview of the Convention.

In this regard, the Fourth Review Conference demonstrated a unity of positions. Balanced geographical representation and gender parity are elements that deserve to be considered in this respect. For this reason, we support the initiative of the Technical Secretariat to address this issue with the States Parties through the most suitable mechanism in order to provide the Organisation with an updated personnel policy.

On another point, in recent years as States Parties, we have supported actions taken toward completing the Syrian chemical disarmament, and we would like to emphasise that as advances were made in the destruction of facilities in that country and monitoring arrangements were put into place, the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) continues to be fundamental. We call for redoubling cooperation aimed at clarifying all of the unresolved matters relating to the Syrian chemical weapons declaration via a structured dialogue. The time that has passed, as described in the recent DAT report addressed to States Parties, should not discourage us from persevering in this effort to overcome the gaps and inconsistencies that still exist within the framework of the joint plan for future activities.

We also value the abilities demonstrated by the Fact-Finding Mission and its report dated 1 March 2019 on the incident relating to the alleged use of toxic chemicals in Douma in April 2018. We welcome the description of the work that was carried out and the conclusions set out in this report.

The OPCW is developing serious work in the fight against terrorism and showing clear progress; we welcome the coordination with the United Nations, as well as the training provided at the regional, sub-regional, and national levels. We also highlight the report by the Director-General from this past 12 February on the OPCW's contribution to this issue and the way in which Articles VI, VII, and X of the Convention serve as a framework for

strengthening response and assistance capacities at the national and regional levels, as well as those of international organisations. Within this context, we highly value the contribution of the Scientific Advisory Board, as well as the role that the Organisation is playing in building and preserving the analytical capacities of the Technical Secretariat and the States Parties.

My delegation firmly believes that the decision from this past 14 January recommending the adoption of an amendment to Schedule 1 of the Annex on Chemicals to the Convention, based on a proposal from three States Parties, will ultimately be adopted. This will be a step forward in strengthening the Convention. The substances indicated in the proposal meet the guidelines on the criteria for inclusion on said Schedule. Thus we express our disappointment that it was not possible to find a consensus on the elements that were supported chiefly because they formed part of the proposal of the Russian Federation, which maintained its objection to the proposal as a whole.

Finally, I would like to underscore the importance that we attribute to the work that takes place in facilitating cooperation in a practical and methodological manner. We will take advantage of the space provided by an upcoming workshop that will bring together the ideas that are contained in the document proposed for the Fourth Review Conference. We also welcome the continued commemoration of a day dedicated to women in chemistry, and we are confident of the support in these areas from the OPCW's Advisory Board for Education and Outreach.

The States Parties and the Organisation will also benefit from an adequate balance between Article XI of the Convention and its other articles, specifically Article X.

We call for support for the idea that the OPCW serves as a platform for consultation and voluntary cooperation in the fields of security and protection of chemicals throughout their entire life cycle, while supporting capacity building at the national and regional levels. In this way, we can work together to strengthen capacities and thus impede chemical attacks and other incidents involving toxic chemicals, provide protection, and respond appropriately. For this reason, the future Centre of Chemistry and Technology will be a key tool, and we welcome the contributions made to the fund to make it a reality as soon as possible.

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