



OPCW

Review Conference

Fourth Session
21 – 30 November 2018

RC-4/NAT.78
21 November 2018
ENGLISH and SPANISH only

PANAMA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR WILLYS DELVALLE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PANAMA TO THE OPCW
AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE
OF THE STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW THE OPERATION
OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

Mr Chairperson,

The convening of this special session to review the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction has called us to reflect on the opportunities that have arisen to exchange visions and prospects that the States Parties must bring together.

Mr Chairperson, Your Excellency Agustín Vásquez, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of El Salvador:

The delegation of Panama welcomes your election and offers its full trust in recognition of your professionalism and your status as a senior representative of the Latin American region.

Cognisant of the commitment that Your Excellency has undertaken at this Conference, we are confident that under your management, important results will be achieved during the work of the review of the Chemical Weapons Convention as we enter the next five years. Our delegation offers its willingness to support your work.

This is my first statement and for that reason, I would like to take advantage of the opportunity to express our gratitude to H.E. Abdelouahab Bellouki, Ambassador of Morocco, at the conclusion of his term as Chairperson of the Twenty-Second Session of the Conference of the States Parties, and for his dedication. His efforts were very commendable.

Likewise, I express my gratitude to H.E. Yun-Yuong Lee, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, for his performance as the current Chairperson and for his commitment to the progress required. I would like to say to my esteemed colleagues Vásquez, Bellouki, and Lee that the Conferences of the States Parties on the Chemical Weapons Convention also require our proactive support and as much collaboration as possible, based on the individual abilities of each State Party.

This is also the first year that we have the participation of H.E. Fernando Arias as Director-General at both conferences, and we reiterate that we are fully confident that he will



know how to interpret the collective visions of the States Parties and, with his leadership, he will know how to find the best path for our Organisation.

The agenda items concerning the Chemical Weapons Convention and ultimately the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in 2018 have been intensive and are deserving of our reflection of the 20 years that have passed while we face a future that will demand adaptation and pragmatic responses to a dynamic international reality that poses both challenges and opportunities for the international community.

We have worked hard together to confront challenges that have been somewhat unexpected, but fortunately we are able to draw upon the Chemical Weapons Convention, which sets us on our path and provides a general outline for both individual and collaborative action. And fortunately, an almost universal number of States have adopted this instrument and are very conscious of its importance.

When developing our Chemical Weapons Convention, we agreed to take on collective responsibility in terms of its mandates and our obligations based on respect for the commitment to its contents. For this reason, almost daily feedback is required on the importance of its pillars and the significant matters enshrined in each of its articles which, collectively, are the subjects that concern us with regard to chemical weapons.

Starting in its preamble, the Convention reminds us that as States Parties, we are determined to act with a view to achieve real progress toward general disarmament. These advances must be clear and true in order to meet the objectives set for a world free of chemical weapons.

This firm belief in the ideal to fully meet this objective is based on the recognition of its preponderance in the field of international peace and security.

Under this premise, the formation of our National Authorities and all of the effort that can be dedicated to the national implementation of the Convention is transformed into one of the key axes for realising and forever preserving progress.

Panama has taken significant steps in cementing a legal framework that promotes legislation at the national level in accordance with our contractual commitment. In this regard, we have the legislation that sets out health parameters for the implementation for the prohibition, development, production, stockpiling, use and destruction of chemical weapons, as well as measures for controlling the trade and safe transport of dual-use materials for reasons of national and international security.

As we know, internal processes have their own dynamics and timeframes. From this perspective, we believe it is important to produce tangible results that will make it possible for us to further consolidate and to have at our disposal the tools necessary to apply the Convention within the context of potentially dangerous scenarios.

It is for this reason that we have ultimately decided to align ourselves with the declaration made on central nervous system-acting chemicals, which was the result of inter-institutional consultations with our National Authority aimed at promoting discussion to prevent and achieve specific actions and recommendations on the current and future situation.

As such, international cooperation is becoming an essential element in the consolidation of national processes aimed at faithful compliance with and national implementation of the Convention. In practice, this cooperation is reflected in a dynamic that has been outlined in the different activities promoted within the topics of assistance and protection and which facilitate access to and the reciprocal exchange of information between the OPCW and the States Parties, and among the members of the Organisation themselves.

As a result, the above, together with verification and an adequate inspection regime, as well as channels of communication with actors in the chemical industry and growing academic knowledge via the Advisory Board for Education and Outreach as primary sources of knowledge for developing strategies for the prevention of the use of chemical weapons, are the parts of one whole destined to ensure that chemicals are not used as weapons.

Years ago, we worked while thinking about what was completed in the twenty years of the Convention, and later we thought about the future that we would follow. For the latter, we established the Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priorities, managed impeccably by Ambassadors H.E. Sabine Nölke of Canada and H.E. Vusi Bruce Koloane of South Africa, whom we acknowledge for their efforts.

This year, H.E. I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja was tasked with the challenge of translating the demands of the States Parties presented at the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fourth Review Conference and integrating them along the way.

Under the principle of good faith, we have brought together the best efforts to exchange and understand the different visions that we have on how to maintain, improve, and transform an Organisation that will monitor at any cost the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons and, at the same time, will impose a universal regime conducive to the elimination of chemical weapons.

Panama is convinced that the objectives that are in favour of humanity can only be achieved using multilateral systems strengthened by international law, with a space to generate the convergence of opinions and facilitate the most legitimate paths for dialogue and building communication channels conducive to building bridges for mutual understanding.

In this regard, one must respect all that has been decided within the legal parameters of international institutions and, as such, the decisions taken by the bodies of consolidated structures to maintain international peace and security must prevail for the common good.

In our case, in line with and in compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention, all of the decisions that the Conference of the States Parties chooses to take are to be interpreted as a point of order to ensure that they come into legal force.

At present, the progress that we have achieved to date was accomplished by respecting the Convention and, for this reason, we reiterate that the use of chemical weapons, by anyone and under any circumstance, is wholly unacceptable; if we wish to maintain the fight against their re-emergence and in favour of the strictly peaceful use of chemistry, the obligation to respect the spirit and the letter of the Convention becomes imperative.

We must express our vehement condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, in any circumstance, and in any form and manifestation of their use; it is wholly unacceptable

especially at a time when we are discussing the fight against the phenomenon of their re-emergence.

For Panama, it is an obligation to discuss this here, when it is essentially the Convention that calls us to prohibit chemical weapons and because the fate of the use of these weapons lies with our humanity.

Thank you.

- - - 0 - - -