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CUBA

**STATEMENT BY SUSELLYS PÉREZ MESA
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETY-FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director General,
Distinguished delegates,

The Cuban delegation congratulates the new President of the OPCW's Executive Council ("the Council"), H. E. Mr. Andrea Perugini, Ambassador of the Republic of Italy, and wishes him success in the performance of his duties.

The Cuban delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Haifa Aissami Madah, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China which are States Parties to the Convention for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (NAM CWC States Parties and China).

The Cuban delegation wishes to highlight the contributions by NAM CWC States Parties and China by presenting document EC-91/NAT.3 (dated 7 June 2019), which constitutes a clear expression of support to OPCW's work, mandate, and the NAM CWC States Parties and China's commitment to the Chemical Weapons Convention ("the Convention") and the Organisation. The proposal on the establishment of the Open-Ended Working Group represents a step forward in the building of a propitious and inclusive scenario to address all OPCW agenda issues requiring consensus of the States Parties and for the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention which could lead us, in an accurate and speedy manner, to its future Fifth Review Conference.

The OPCW has not yet concluded its mandate. There are still very important challenges to face and great tasks to complete according to the letter and the spirit of the Convention. The valuable data contained in the report about the status of the implementation of the Convention in the year 2018 (EC-91/CRP.1, dated 14 June 2019), which commences with the phrase "The OPCW's work remained the focus of international attention throughout 2018", confirm that the full national implementation of the Convention by the States Parties is still pending and that the verification of about 3.36 % of the destruction of the Category 1 chemical weapons is still pending which means only a 0.34 % progress as compared to 2017. In this regard, we urge the Possessor State to finalise this process in an expeditious and safe manner, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, its Annex on the Verification, and with the full application of the relevant decisions adopted.



Likewise, the above mentioned report reflects the efforts of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division with programmes contributing to potentiate the exchange of knowledge and capacity building in the context of the limited resources at hand, which shall continue to be improved. This report also highlighted some positive results in the conduction of the 96 international cooperation and assistance activities and programs, mainly in capacity building, with more than 2,000 participants from all regional groups; of them, 29 on economic and technological development, with 584 participants, including several Cuban experts. These programmes shall increasingly respond to the growing needs of the States Parties and must have a real impact on their economic and technological development.

After 21 years of OPCW existence, the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI has not been achieved, which constitutes one of the pillars of the Convention. All States Parties, without exclusion, have the legitimate right to participate in the broadest exchange of substances, equipment, and information in the area of chemistry for purposes not forbidden by the Convention and at the same time are obliged avoid placing obstacles to the economic and technological development of the States Parties or the international cooperation on chemical activities.

The Delegation of Cuba categorically rejects once more the economic, commercial, and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba, and its tightening through the activation of Title III of the so called Helms Burton Act. This clear violation of International Law, the UN Charter and the norms of free trade also constitute a violation of the Convention on Chemical Weapons since the Convention demands the States Parties not to impose any restrictions which may limit or hinder to trade, development and the promotion of scientific and technological knowledge in the field of chemistry for industrial, agricultural, research, medical, and pharmaceutical purposes among others contained in Article XI. We once again demand the end the blockade; an absurd, failed policy, which has been repudiated by the international community.

The OPCW Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) shall further strengthen the effective evaluation of the impact of international cooperation programs in the context of economic and technological development of the States Parties, intended to perfecting and expanding them. This is why we appreciate that Secretariat presented in 2018 a monitoring and assessment project with the assistance of external experts. In this respect, the Cuban delegation would appreciate that details of this project and the results reached were conveyed under the consideration of item 6.I of the Agenda.

The Cuban delegation reiterates its commitment with the Convention and the OPCW to achieve balanced results that represent the interests of all States Parties. We call for preserving consensus and transparency in the decision-making process that has characterized this Organisation.

I request that this speech be circulated as an official document of the Ninety-First Session of the OPCW’s Council and that it be published on its external server.

Thank you very much.