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**VENEZUELA**

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBERS OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT THAT ARE STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION AND CHINA DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HAIFA AISSAMI MADAH PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA TO THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-FIRST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to deliver this Statement on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China (NAM CWC States Parties and China), excluding Colombia and Peru who have decided to temporarily suspend their participation in the Movement.

Mr Chairperson, Excellency Ambassador Andrea Perugini of Italy,

At the outset, I would like to welcome you as Chairperson of the Executive Council and express our confidence in your able leadership to steer the sessions of the Council during your tenure to successful conclusions.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China wish to thank the Director-General, H.E. Fernando Arias, for his comprehensive report.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China encourage all States Parties and the Technical Secretariat to support our proposal for the “Establishment of an Open-Ended Working Group to identify and prioritise the implementation of items on which consensus is achievable among States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention”, document (EC-91/NAT.3, dated 7 June 2019).

The NAM CWC States Parties and China attach great importance to the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention. In this regard, we strongly urge States not yet Party to the Convention to ratify or accede to it without further delay or preconditions and emphasise that these States should not derive any benefit therefrom.



The NAM CWC States Parties and China, while committed to the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Convention for the realisation of its object and purpose, acknowledge that the implementation of the Convention contributes to international peace and security as well as economic and technological development of the States Parties, including sustainable development goals.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China reiterate their long-standing principled position toward the achievement of general and complete disarmament, under strict and effective international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, we underline that the existence and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continue to pose a significant threat.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China stress that the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as weapons anywhere by anyone and under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the provisions of the Convention, legal norms and standards of the international community. We also reaffirm that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China condemn the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups. Deeply concerned about the use or threat of use by such groups, we request the Technical Secretariat to investigate, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, all reports on the use or threat of use of chemical weapons by such groups and keep the States Parties informed accordingly.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China express their deep concern regarding any attempt to accuse States Parties of using chemical weapons on the basis of unsubstantiated allegations made by media reports or any other open sources, including non-governmental entities. This trend can cause a dangerous precedent in the future work of the OPCW.

Noting with serious concern that the final extended deadline of April 2012 for the destruction of chemical weapons was not met by certain possessor States Parties, the NAM CWC States Parties and China stress that the destruction of chemical weapons is the fundamental and top priority of the Organisation and urge the only one remaining possessor State Party to expedite all necessary measures to ensure its compliance with the provisions of the Convention and relevant decisions of the policy-making organs. The NAM CWC States Parties and China stress that the main focus of the Organisation should remain on the complete elimination of all categories of chemical weapons, as one of the main pillars of the Convention.

We also wish to emphasise the determination expressed by the Third Review Conference that the destruction of all categories of chemical weapons, namely old chemical weapons, abandoned chemical weapons, and chemical weapons stockpiles, as the fundamental pillar of the Convention, shall be completed in the shortest possible time in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and its Annex on Implementation and Verification, and with the full application of the relevant decisions adopted by the policy-making organs.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China stress that further efforts should be made to complete the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) as soon as possible and to address challenges including ensuring the safety of people and protecting the environment in accordance with the Convention and the Council decision (EC-67/DEC.6, dated 15 February 2012) as amended by the Council at its Eighty-Fourth Session in accordance with the destruction plan beyond the year 2016 jointly submitted by Japan and China. In this regard, we welcome the invitation by China and Japan to the Chairperson of the Council, the Director-General, and a delegation representing the Council to visit Haerbaling abandoned chemical weapons destruction site in Jilin Province, People's Republic of China, which will take place from 2 to 7 September 2019, and believe that such visits will provide meaningful insight into the ACW issue.

Recalling the decisions of the Executive Council with respect to the elimination and destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons, and the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons production facilities, the NAM CWC States Parties and China welcome the substantive efforts made and progress achieved in this regard. We also welcome the Director-General's reports on the completion of the destruction of all chemical weapons and chemical weapon production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. We look forward to the continuation of a successful cooperation existing between the OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic on all issues.

We take note of the work done so far by the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and look forward to receiving its reports on its ongoing activities. We expect the approach followed by the FFM teams would be uniform and consistent.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China attach great importance to the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of Article XI and emphasise the need to strengthen and speed up efforts in the economic and technological development of the States Parties. In this regard, the NAM CWC States Parties and China encourage all States Parties and the Technical Secretariat to take into consideration our position paper on the implementation of Article XI (RC-4/NAT.72, dated 26 November 2018) circulated during the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We also underline the importance of the promotion of international cooperation for the benefit of States Parties through the transfer of technology, material and equipment for peaceful purposes in the field of chemistry and removal of any discriminatory restrictions such as unilateral sanctions against other States Parties that are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Convention, affect the Convention's long term viability, and have an adverse impact on the existing level of trust among States Parties.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China welcome the successful convening of the 2019 Review and Evaluation Workshops of the Components of an Agreed Framework for the Implementation of Article XI, on 1 July 2019. We recognise that such exercise is a useful platform to advance the development of concrete measures to enhance the implementation of this Article. Moreover, we believe that a comprehensive discussion in the policy-making organs on the implementation of components of the Agreed Framework is the best way to formulate an OPCW strategy for the full implementation of Article XI. We encourage States Parties to make fullest efforts in the existing mechanism, as well as in future ones, to achieve this purpose.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China underline that the policy-making organs of the OPCW should allocate adequate financial and human resources in core activities of its annual Programme and Budget, including for the implementation of International Cooperation activities, especially Article XI, and other related programmes, considering national and regional economic needs and realities.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China commend the progress achieved under the fourth phase of the Africa Programme and look forward to attain further accomplishments under its fifth phase. We underline the importance of sustaining and funding this Programme under the regular budget allocation. In addition, the NAM CWC States Parties and China commend the convening of the 17th Regional Meeting of National Authorities in Addis-Ababa from 12 to 14 June 2019, which served to further enhance cooperation between the OPCW and the African Union and its regional bodies, with the aim of achieving full and effective implementation of the CWC in African States Parties.

The NAM CWC State Parties and China recognise the importance of education and outreach programmes in achieving the main objectives of the Convention, and in this regard, welcome the work done by the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach, and encourage its continuation.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China welcome the project to upgrade the current OPCW Laboratory to an OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology to strengthen science and technology capabilities of the OPCW in responding to the threat of chemical weapons as well as to support capacity building in the States Parties. We, therefore, encourage States Parties to support the establishment of the Centre as appropriate, and urge that its modalities and mandate be considered and adopted by the policy-making organs, thus ensuring ownership of all States Parties. We also stress the importance of transparency in the establishment as well as the future work of the Centre.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China encourage all States Parties to fully implement their obligations under Article X. We stress the need for all States Parties and in particular those in a position to do so, to contribute to the Voluntary Fund for Assistance to ensure the ability of the Technical Secretariat to develop a state of readiness to provide timely, adequate, and effective assistance to respond to the increasing demand of States Parties. This assistance delivery should be fully consistent with the provisions of the Convention and upon States Parties' request.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China pay respect to victims of chemical weapons and their families, and in light of the decision adopted by the Conference of the States Parties at its Sixteenth Session (C-16/DEC.13, dated 2 December 2011), appreciate the States Parties for their contribution to the Trust Fund for the International Support Network for Victims of chemical weapons and encourage all the States Parties to actively contribute to the Trust Fund.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China encourage States Parties to assist and support the victims of chemical weapons upon request. Furthermore, we urge States Parties to facilitate and make materials and equipment-related assistance available to those States Parties which are in need, without unnecessary restrictions.

In the context of the implementation of Article VII, the NAM CWC States Parties and China encourage States Parties and the Technical Secretariat to continue providing appropriate, tailor-made assistance and technical support to States Parties in enhancing their national capacities and in carrying out their national implementation measures.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China re-emphasize that the employment of personnel in the Technical Secretariat be fair and transparent and stress that it shall be in accordance with Article VIII, paragraph 44, of the Convention. It is also imperative to ensure that the Technical Secretariat observe an equitable geographical and balanced gender representation, at all professional levels of the organisation. We encourage States Parties to continue to discuss modalities for candidates from developing regions to enable them to more easily access professional positions in the OPCW and look forward to productive discussions on the internship and Junior Professional Officer (JPO) programmes.

In conclusion, Mr Chairperson,

We encourage States Parties to work in the spirit of goodwill and cooperation for the successful conclusion of this session and to neither polarise nor politicise the work of the Organisation. We reiterate that the practice of consensus-based decision-making by the Policy Making Organs is the best modality for achieving the object and purposes of the Convention. Thus, the NAM CWC States Parties and China urge all States Parties to cooperate inclusively, so the Policy Making Organs of the OPCW can return to the practice of making decisions based on this very important principle. We reaffirm the role of the policy-making organs in the evaluation and implementation of all issues related to the Convention in accordance with their mandates.

Thank you.

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