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VENEZUELA

**STATEMENT 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,

Mr Director-General,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Please allow me to open today with words of welcome for His Excellency, Andrea Perugini, Ambassador of the Italian Republic, to welcome him at the helm of the work of this Ninety-First Session of the Executive Council; we assure you of the commitment of our Delegation to work together to achieve the objectives of our Organisation.

We also wish to welcome Ambassador Fernando Arias and thank him for his extensive report.

My country aligns itself with the statement that it had the honour of presenting yesterday on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, and would like to underscore some points in our national capacity.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates its position on the principles that set out the strongest possible condemnation of the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals anywhere, by anyone, and under any circumstance. We also reaffirm that the perpetrators of said use must be held accountable.

Our country once again reiterates that the destruction of all categories of chemical weapons and production facilities must be a priority for our Organisation, and for that reason, we urge the only remaining possessor State Party to take and strengthen every necessary step to ensure the implementation of all relevant decisions of the policy-making organs of the OPCW.

At the same time, we welcome the progress reported on the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the invitation expressed by China and Japan to visit the abandoned chemical weapons destruction site in Haerbaling, the



People's Republic of China, from 2 to 7 September 2019. We believe this initiative will contribute to a better understanding of the processes involving abandoned chemical weapons.

Our country shares the unity of purpose, a positive approach, dialogue, and consensus as the elements that are indispensable for achieving common objectives in the fight for disarmament and the non-proliferation of chemical weapons, and the general eradication of all weapons of mass destruction.

It is precisely the spirit of a search for consensus and dialogue in favour of the work of our Organisation that drives Venezuela to support the proposal presented by the Non-Aligned Movement and China to establish an open-ended working group that would make it possible to create the conditions necessary to review the decision-making process under a principle of consensus, as a formula for working and confronting the challenges that our Organisation will face in the future.

Our delegation welcomes and expresses thanks for the well prepared and positive comments, as well as the genuine interest demonstrated by the other delegations that bring life to our Organisation, and we are looking forward to continuing a constructive dialogue on this initiative from the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

Because our delegation firmly believes that this will be a step in the right direction, we would establish the aforementioned open-ended working group under the guidance of Ambassadors Puja and Vásquez, whom we thank for the consulting work they have developed to date to define the matters and issues that should enjoy a consensus, as well as the work methods and frames of reference that would guide the functioning of this mechanisms, which we are confident will come to contribute to the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of the pillars of the Convention.

Likewise, we believe that establishing an open-ended working group would in no way make redundant or overlap the work that is already being done in some areas, but the opposite, as has already happened in the past when existing facilitating mechanisms coexisted such as the Open-Ended Working Groups for Future Priorities and Preparations for the Fourth Review Conference. We believe that this mechanism would be able to operate and, in all cases, strengthen the work in areas that have not seen the progress desired.

Venezuela advocates for the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of all of the provisions of the Convention, for the realisation of its object and purpose, while recognising that the application of the Convention contributes to international peace and security, as well as the economic and technological development of States Parties, including sustainable development goals.

Likewise, our country assigns high importance to the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI and underscores the need to strengthen and accelerate the efforts that will make it possible to achieve the economic and technological development of the States Parties. We also highlight the importance of promoting international cooperation for the benefit of all States Parties via the transfer of technology, material, and equipment for peaceful purposes within the field of chemistry.

As such, we are making a call to eliminate any discriminatory restriction and reject unilateral sanctions against other States Parties, which are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Convention, thus affecting its viability in the long term and negatively impacting the

development of countries that, just like ours, are seriously affected by such arbitrary and unilateral sanctions.

Venezuela is pleased to welcome the reports presented by the Technical Secretariat on the finalisation of the destruction of the chemical weapons destruction facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. We also express our satisfaction with the consultation process between the Technical Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic under the methodology established within the Structured Dialogue. We urge the parties to continue with this consultative mechanism and successful cooperation.

Venezuela thanks the Director-General for the presentation of the draft OPCW Programme and Budget for 2020 on 5 July. In this regard, we would like to reiterate our support for the zero nominal growth principle, and we believe that the Organisation can work in strict adherence to this principle, as it has demonstrated in implementing previous budgets.

In conclusion:

Venezuela reaffirms the necessity to defend the principles set out in the Convention, safeguarding the technical essence of this Organisation and preserving this as a multilateral space that is so important for disarmament and the non-proliferation of chemical weapons in the world.

I would like to request that this statement and the full version thereof be considered an official document of the Ninety-First Session of the Executive Council and made available on the Organisation's website.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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