



OPCW

Executive Council

Ninety-Second Session
8 – 11 October 2019

EC-92/NAT.23
8 October 2019
ENGLISH and SPANISH only

CUBA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SORAYA ÁLVAREZ NÚÑEZ
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETY-SECOND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr President,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

The Cuban delegation subscribes the speech delivered by Her Excellency Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah, on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, which are States Parties to the Convention for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (NAM Group and China).

The Cuban delegation reiterates the traditional support of the Republic of Cuba to the OPCW and the solid compliance of its obligations in virtue of the Convention for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (“the Convention”).

The NAM Group and China continues to play a decisive role in support of the OPCW in promoting an inclusive, transparent, constructive and technical guided debate of the Organisation’s agenda. The document EC-91/NAT.3 (dated 7 June 2019) presented by this important Group on establishing an Open-Ended Working Group maintains its relevance and importance. It is an initiative which would foster a holistic approach in consideration the important issues on the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of all the Convention’s provisions. Likewise, it may become a platform to build new consensus within the Organisation and for the introduction to the policy-making organs (PMO) of new recommendations in enhancing the OPCW relevance in the future and in the path towards the successful holding of the Fifth Review Conference.

Nevertheless, the Cuban delegation as part of NAM Group and China expresses its willingness to work constructively in the building of any consensus mechanism which may incorporate different proposals of the States Parties, which in the view of the Cuban delegation must count with a systematic interaction in the PMO through a system of reporting, evaluation, and feedback. It should take into account the balanced treatment of all issues still pending in its implementation and those which could be perfected and even those, within the mandate of the Convention, which constitute future challenges for the OPCW.

In the path towards consensus on the establishment of the mechanism, the Cuban delegation thanks and considers timely the alternative response presented by the President of the Executive Council (“the Council”) which intends to bring together the different approaches of



the States Parties in considering important topics of interest, some of which are currently addressed by the existing Facilitations. In this aspect it is believed that the strengthening of the different facilitations is very important and the Cuban delegation wishes to remind the forum of its modest contribution to this effect related to some elements to be considered in the strengthening of the Facilitation of Article XI, contained in the national document EC-91/NAT.23 (dated 11 July 2019). Likewise, the delegation wishes to highlight the agreements reached during the last meeting of Facilitation of Article XI held last 1 October aiming at the future improvement of the works, including a better planning of the Annual workshop on the components of an agreed framework for the full implementation of Article XI in accordance with decision C-16/DEC.10 (dated 1 December 2011).

In respect to the Organisation's Programme and Budget for 2020, the Cuban delegation acknowledges and appreciates the efforts made by the Technical Secretariat ("the Secretariat") and the Co-facilitators towards a detailed and professional presentation of these topics facilitating the understanding and involvement of delegations in the broad consultations held. However, the Cuban delegation considers it opportune to highlight the following elements:

- a) The importance of resuming the explicit mention in the Organisation's Programme and Budget of the OPCW of the concept of Zero Nominal Growth, which is part of the policies and legislations in many States Parties.
- b) The need that OPCW PMO's consider in the future existing practices ever more extended in the Organisation, on the establishment of numerous funds and special accounts, with the purpose of drafting guidelines and criteria resulting from the consensus of the States Parties.
- c) The importance of maintaining the existing procedure on the adoption of separate decisions on each of the topics associated to the Organisation's Programme and Budget and not through a single omnibus decision containing topics of different nature and scope, both in procedural and content related matters, with the purpose of facilitating the adoption of important decisions.

On the subject of the OPCW 2020-2024 Medium Term Plan, document EC-92/S/1 C-24/S/1 (dated 22 July 2019), the Cuban delegation wishes to express some concerns to the narrative of this Report and its four result areas relevant to the OPCW's future and the implementation of the Convention. In the narrative of the Medium Term Plan important omissions can be identified regarding the mission of the Organisation on the one hand and on the other assume policies which have not been agreed upon by the States Parties.

Among the crucial omissions in the Medium-Term Plan of the OPCW 2020 – 2024, it is found that the pillars of the Convention on the promotion of the economic and technological development of the States Parties and international cooperation, key aspects explicitly contained in the Preamble of the Convention and its articles and which are not comprised in the four result areas to be reached in the implementation of the Convention during the next four years.

Regarding the organisational governance of the OPCW it is a reason of concern that no political narrative is considered on the need of moving forward in the geographic and gender balance in the human resources area for the Secretariat aspects extensively debated in the

preparation process for the Fourth Review Conference, which in addition do not have specific goals in the Plan or any expression in the results areas.

Among the consensus taken for granted in the Plan's narrative, without the involvement of any decision of the States Parties, it is worth mentioning for instance; the inclusion of some work concepts and methods by the Secretariat on its capacity to use remote verification methods in the conduction of all types of non-routine inspections. It is also taken for granted the OPCW transition, which is far from responding to the letter and the spirit of the Convention, when it states, and I quote "that will allow it to remain a multilateral security instrument", a concept which diverges from the Preamble of the Convention which explicitly reads, and I quote: "The States Parties to this Convention, determined to act with a view to achieving effective progress towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction."

When bringing attention to these elements the Cuban delegation would like to urge to the Secretariat to look for remedies in the OPCW Medium-Term Plan 2020-2024 narrative to overcome some imbalances identified in the same before its approval by the Twenty-Fourth Conference of the States Parties.

In regards to other topics under consideration as part of the Ninety-Second Council agenda, the Cuban delegation would like to issue the following comments:

The Cuban delegation welcomes the inclusion of a new Agenda item entitled: "Update on the situation regarding the proposed technical changes to the Annex on Chemicals of the Chemical Weapons Convention: preparation for consideration of this issue at the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties", a proposal which would favour the joint adoption of all the technical changes presented by different delegations on the Annex on Chemicals of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

On the proposal to modify the Rules of Procedure of the Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Affairs (ABAF), the Cuban delegation supports the legitimate right of the States Parties to nominate the candidates they consider meet the professional requirements to fulfil the mandate of this body.

On the agenda item related to the progress made in the Syrian program for the elimination of chemical weapons, the Cuban delegation acknowledges the cooperation maintained by the Syrian Arab Republic with the Secretariat and reiterates the position of principle, in considering that any interrelation with that State Party must be carried out in the same manner that it is conducted with any other, without foreign interference, with full respect to its sovereignty and territorial integrity and with the consent of its legitimate authorities.

The Cuban delegation takes note of the Report issued by the Secretariat on the progress and review of the status of application of Article XI of the Convention, despite of the limited progress still made in its implementation, taking into account that the majority of the States Parties are developing countries and urgently require receiving the benefits of the implementation of the Convention on our economic and technological development.

As this important forum knows, in the case of Cuba the situation becomes even more unfavourable due to the violation by the United States of America of the provisions of Article

XI of the Convention, which establishes that this article shall be implemented in a manner which avoids hampering the economic or technological development of States Parties, and international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under this Convention including the international exchange of scientific and technical information and chemicals and equipment for the production, processing or use of chemicals for purposes not prohibited under this Convention.

The Cuban delegation considers it fit to inform the OPCW's Council and its Secretariat that last year the government of the United States of America in a deliberate manner, instead of reviewing its existing national regulations in the field of the trade of chemical products so that it may be coherent with the object and purpose of the Convention, in accordance with Article XI, paragraph 2, item e, acted on contrary to the above and has been obstinate and systematic in creating new regulations, executive orders and all sorts of aberrant legislative measures, of every nature and scope; to prohibit activities in the field of chemical activities and others related to international cooperation with Cuba in this areas, as well as, with regards to other economic and social sectors which contravenes the Charter of the United Nations, International Law, and the norms and rules of free trade.

The Cuban delegation denounces this gross violation of the Convention by the government of the United States of America in virtue of the tightening of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed to Cuba for almost 60 years, which not only remains intact and continues to be the centre piece of its policy towards Cuba, but also is multiplied with ever more palpable effects in its extraterritorial application. We demand once more the end of this failed policy, which continues to hamper the development of the chemical industry in Cuba and render impossible the access to technologies and chemical products indispensable for our development.

Cuba will not renounce to its principles; neither will it give up in its demand for the lifting of the blockade. This is why the upcoming 6 and 7 November 2019, the Cuban government will present for the 28 consecutive years before the General Assembly of the United Nations a resolution entitled: "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". This resolution has historically received the support of the overwhelming majority of the Member States of the United Nations.

I kindly request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Ninety-Second Session of the Council and that it be published in its external server.

Thank you very much.

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