



**OPCW**

**Conference of the States Parties**

Twenty-Fourth Session  
25 – 29 November 2019

C-24/NAT.44  
27 November 2019  
ENGLISH and SPANISH only

**BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HAIFA AISSAMI MADAH  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF  
VENEZUELA TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION  
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Excellences, distinguished delegates,  
Mr Director-General,  
Mr Chairperson,

Please allow me to express our congratulations and welcome His Excellency Mr Krassimir Kostov, the Ambassador of Bulgaria, as Chairperson of this Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, as well as the recently elected Vice-Chairpersons; I can assure you of our delegation's commitment to working in a dedicated manner toward achieving the common objectives of our Organisation.

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

Venezuela aligns itself with the declaration presented by His Excellency Mr Jafar Huseynzada of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, and would like to underscore some points in our national capacity.

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

Venezuela reiterates once again its position of principle on the strongest possible condemnation of the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as weapons anywhere, by anyone, and under any circumstance. We also reaffirm that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.

It is this very spirit of searching for a consensus and holding a dialogue in favour of the work of our Organisation that motivates Venezuela to support the proposals presented by the Non-Aligned Movement and China to establish an open-ended working group that would make it possible to strengthen existing facilitations and put into place the conditions necessary to return to consensus-based decision making as the working formula for confronting the future challenges facing the Organisation.

It is for this reason that any mechanism in place to address the problems identified by the States Parties, including cross-cutting issues, should have a reporting structure to guarantee



balanced and equal treatment of all problems. This will guarantee the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of all of the pillars of the Convention.

The Programme and Budget is without a doubt a subject to which my country assigns great importance. For this reason, we welcome the efforts of the Technical Secretariat and the co-facilitators with regard to its presentation and the consultations held on this matter. Nevertheless, my delegation would like to reiterate some elements that we have already expressed earlier regarding the sustained zero nominal-growth policy that Venezuela has maintained for all international bodies—including the OPCW—and which besides is largely justified if we take into account the fact that our Organisation has circumvented the most difficult period while achieving its goals—that is to say, chemical disarmament in accordance with the verification regime—which has led to the destruction of 97 per cent of declared chemical stockpiles.

Combined with this is the fact that to date, there is only one possessor State, which is why we have every reason to believe that the OPCW can be equally efficient or even more so than in prior years, during which it maintained zero nominal growth. We also believe that budgetary reallocations can be made to provide for a substantial increase for international cooperation, which fosters economic and technological development for purposes not prohibited by the Convention, in addition to strengthening the national capacities of the States Parties—all within the framework of the Convention and without sacrificing its essence or objectives.

It is of great importance to maintain the established good practice of the procedures for submitting and subsequently adopting separate decisions on each one of the items in the OPCW Programme and Budget, and not as one single “omnibus” decision. We believe that in the interest of transparency and in order to contribute to the timely taking of decisions on this issue, items that are of a distinct nature and scope should not be mixed or combined into one single “package”.

With regard to the cash surplus, including the cash surplus from previous years, our country reiterates its wish to have these funds managed in strict compliance with the Organisation’s Financial Regulations and, in every case, assigned to the quotes and contributions of our country. For this reason, we do not support the allocation thereof for a use other than what is provided for in the OPCW’s financial norms.

My delegation is pleased to welcome the proposals for a technical modification to the Annex on Chemicals to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and we hope that a consensus is reached for the joint adoption at this Conference of all of the technical changes submitted by the different delegations for the Annex on Chemicals to the Convention.

We also welcome the reports by the Director-General on the finalisation of the destruction of all chemical weapons production facilities and declared chemical weapons of the Syrian Arab Republic. Likewise, we encourage and await with interest the continuation of the existing successful cooperation between the OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic on all outstanding matters.

My delegation had the honour of actively participating in the visit that took place last September to the Haerbaling site for the destruction of chemical weapons abandoned in China by Japan.

We thank both delegations and the Chinese authorities in particular for their warm welcome and hospitality and for providing all participants with the opportunity to learn about this

critical work on-site and firsthand; in spite of the complexities, the work is progressing in a very professional atmosphere and at the highest standards.

In this regard, I would like to call upon all of the delegations to follow up on this matter, as it constitutes an important objective of this Organisation; its implementation will not be possible without the mutual collaboration of both countries.

Venezuela assigns great importance to the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of all of the provisions of Article XI and emphasises the need to strengthen and accelerate the efforts that will help achieve the economic and technological development of the States Parties.

We also highlight the importance of promoting international cooperation for the good of all States Parties via the exchange of technology, material, and equipment for peaceful purposes in the field of chemistry, and the elimination of any discriminatory restrictions; we call for the rejection of all coercive measures and unilateral sanctions against other States Parties, which are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Convention and not only affect its long-term viability, but also have an adverse impact on the development of countries that, like ours, are seriously affected by these arbitrary and unilateral sanctions.

In conclusion, as you know, our Convention stipulates the principle of rotation as a fundamental rule for guaranteeing the active participation of all States Parties, without any discrimination, in forming the Executive Council. Regrettably, once again it has not been possible to achieve the consensus necessary at the head of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries due to the interference and political pressure exerted upon our region by political actors that are not GRULAC members.

This is why we request the support of this august assembly in restoring the balance necessary to allow many of our countries to exercise their legitimate aspirations of serving this Organisation as a member of the Executive Council, as some have not had the opportunity to do so or, in the case of Venezuela, have only been able to do so once over the span of nearly 20 years, in spite of having had the support of a consensus for the nominations in our region for many years.

For this reason, I ask you to make a vote of confidence so that one of the four available seats will be Venezuela's, and we will be able to continue working and defending the principles set out in the Convention, safeguarding the technical essence of this Organisation, and preserving this multilateral space that is so important for global disarmament and the non-proliferation of chemical weapons.

I would like to request, Mr Chairperson, that this statement be considered an official document of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties and published on the Organisation's website.

Thank you for your kind attention.

- - - 0 - - -