



OPCW

Executive Council

Ninety-Second Session
8 – 11 October 2019

EC-92/NAT.37
8 October 2019
ENGLISH and SPANISH only

PANAMA

**STATEMENT BY MRS ARMONÍA CHANG DE BELCHIEUR
ACTING CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES OF THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA TO THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-SECOND
SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

First and foremost, the delegation of Panama presents its greetings and expresses its highest acknowledgment; since the start of your chairmanship, the most honourable efforts have been made to contribute to the objectives that have been addressed at these sessions.

At all times, professionalism and seriousness have prevailed in your work at each of the sessions of this august Council that you have managed. Mr Chairperson, please accept the full support and respect of the delegation of Panama.

Our delegation extends its enthusiastic greetings to the Director-General, H.E. Fernando Arias, the Bureau in attendance today, and all of the delegations here today. Likewise, we express to the Director-General our gratitude for his full opening statement, in which he shared with us details on progress made by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The delegation of Panama begins its participation at this session noting that the convention of the Ninety-Second Session of the Executive Council marks for us the beginning of a short period that is approaching, during which it will be time for profound reflection, as there will be only two years before we hold the one-hundredth session of this Council.

In order to forge our way into the future with predictions, we will need to outline numerous scenarios and make a variety of assumptions, while also looking back and recalling the long way that we have come since the establishment of our Organisation and the entry into force of our Convention, without leaving the slightest doubt regarding the urgent need to implement its provisions.

The past has demonstrated that, thanks to the Chemical Weapons Convention, great steps towards the destruction of declared stockpiles are now recorded in history. Nevertheless, while on the one hand we can be satisfied with what has been achieved to date via the OPCW—including the energy that has been channelled by the States Parties, the time spent, the persistence demonstrated, and the efforts made to achieve the full implementation of the



Convention—on the other hand, we must redouble our actions in order to move forward on issues concerning the peaceful use of chemistry.

Within this context, we welcome the eighth report of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach, particularly in light of the delegation of Panama's facilitation of its establishment three years ago. Today, we applaud the fact that this Board and the Director-General have been able to address issues such as how to improve interaction among different stakeholders, including the staff of the Secretariat and the National Authorities, permanent interaction with chemical societies and associations that support the objectives of the Organisation, and improved levels of transparency via the redesign of the OPCW's website.

We also applaud the use of new materials and technology for education and outreach activities, and we assure you that our delegation will listen carefully to the statement delivered by the Advisory Board to the Conference of the States Parties at its Twenty-Fourth Session.

Another mechanism to realign the efforts of the States Parties has been carried forward by the co-facilitators appointed to address matters relevant to the Organisation and identify the most appropriate spaces for discussions thereof: H.E. Mr Agustín Vásquez Gómez, Ambassador of El Salvador, and H.E. Mr I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja, Ambassador of Indonesia, as well as the commitment of Your Excellency, Mr Chairperson. For this reason, we value all of the dedication and time spent, and we undertake to continue with every effort to maintain an open channel of communication in order to identify the optimal work modality.

We would like to address the work of the Ambassadors, the Vice-Chairs, and the coordinators of the various working groups, and we congratulate the facilitators, namely: Mr Martin Pizinger of the Czech Republic and his work on Article X; Mr Junaid Sadiq of Pakistan and his work on Article XI; Ms Jenny Bowie of Colombia and her work on Article VII; and Mr Arata Mizukami of Japan, who is tasked with organising the consultations on the External Auditor's report. The work of Mr Daniel Valente Baptista and Mr Marcin Kawalowski, colleagues from Portugal and Poland, has been of particular importance in conducting the consultations on the budget. This practice of mutual collaboration among States Parties is of vital importance for making progress on issues of common interest.

We welcome H.E. Mr Jorge Skinner-Klée Arenales, Ambassador of Guatemala, in his capacity as Vice-Chairperson of the Executive Council for our regional group.

Within the framework of the regulations and implementation of the Convention, missions have been carried out that have required the highly specialized work of the Organisation's technical teams and, it stands to recall, in risky conditions. We highly value their work, which involved very delicate assignments that have been completed. In this regard, it is necessary to continue to strive for equal geographic distribution and gender parity as much as possible, and we welcome the initiatives that the Director-General has already put into practice.

Maintaining the inspection and verification regime is a challenge; maintaining the Organisation in complete balance with international cooperation and assistance activities that will contribute to the strengthening of the capacities of the National Authorities and training of local teams through the cooperation that the Technical Secretariat fosters is a fundamental objective.

Please allow me to echo the words of the authorities of Panama, according to which “global problems demand multilateral solutions”. Panama is a peace-loving country that respects international law. For this reason, it places its full confidence in the work of the OPCW, and calls upon all States Parties, without exception, to maintain constant cooperation with the Organisation.

It is imperative that we promote the exclusive, peaceful use of chemicals and prevent re-emergence. Panama rejects the use of chemicals as weapons by anyone and under any circumstance, because there is no justification for the loss of human lives, particularly those of children, due to the deplorable use of any weapons, let alone chemical weapons.

I request, Mr Chairperson, that this statement be considered an official document of this session of the Council.

Thank you.

--- 0 ---