



OPCW

Executive Council

Ninety-Third Session
10 – 12 March 2020

EC-93/NAT.30
11 March 2020
ENGLISH and RUSSIAN only

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR A. V. SHULGIN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
TO THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-THIRD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM 8(A)**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished Delegates,

The Russian Federation has actively held a dialogue with the United States of America as the co-authors of the draft decision of the Executive Council (“the Council”) on changing the Rules of Procedure of the Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters (ABAF), both in The Hague and in Washington. Some of the Russian comments have been taken into account, although some key provisions of the document continue to give us cause for serious concern. In this regard, we proposed amendments to the draft decision. They have been submitted on time, ahead of the start of this Council session.

We are confident that updating the rules for the auxiliary bodies of international organisations is important and is necessary in order to bring them into alignment with advanced practices. However, we cannot agree with the attempts being made under a variety of specious pretexts to exert pressure on a prestigious body such as the ABAF, essentially bringing its activities under the control of a political body—the Council—thus holding it hostage to the interests of certain States Parties.

It is for this very reason that we do not support the proposal to dismiss members from the ABAF as per the initiative of the Council. We proceed based on the fact that each State Party has the right to nominate one candidate or another, confirming his or her professional and personal qualities, skill set, knowledge, and required qualifications. The appointment of new members to the ABAF is confirmed at a Council session. The dismissal of a member from said body should be guided by the same logic, with the mandatory consent of the state that nominated said expert.

We emphasise that the implementation of the decision in its current state would be fraught with improprieties, pressure exerted upon members of this important advisory body, and attempts on the part of certain States Parties to manipulate the Council—based on political or other motives. What will become of the independent status of the ABAF if the danger of dismissal by a Council vote is constantly looming over its members when someone does not like their opinion or for some other reason? The draft rule proposed by the authors does not



only not meet the rules and practices of international organisations, but it could even result in an extremely negative precedent for other inter-governmental agencies.

Furthermore, we are against introducing the concept of a “code of conduct” in the rules of procedure. This kind of “code” is not the norm for the expert advisory bodies of international organisations. A state nominating its expert to this body takes partial responsibility for that individual. At the same time, we do not have anything against clearly noting the need to comport with professional ethics, underscoring the importance of the work of the ABAF for the benefit of the Organisation.

We are against including information about “conflicts of interest” in the set of documents for nominating a candidate. To a large degree, the concept of “conflicts of interest” is applicable to supervisory agencies, the purview of which is fundamentally different from the scope of the ABAF’s work. The Advisory Body does not conduct audits, investigations, or prepare recommendations for strengthening internal control or other related areas that might have, or have the potential for, actual conflicts of interest directly impacting objectivity and work results. I would highlight the fact that the overwhelming majority of ABAF members are government officials, and some of them are staff members posted at diplomatic representations in the Netherlands. Just what kind of conflicting contractual or other issues could there be? In the end, this body is not a commercial business.

We would draw attention to the fact that according to the current wording of the rules, the draft decision on changing this document should be adopted by consensus. We believe it is important to comply with that requirement as the Council considers this matter.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Ninety-Third Session of the Council and published on the Organisation’s extranet and external webpage.

- - - 0 - - -