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MEXICO

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JOSÉ ANTONIO ZABALGOITIA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MEXICO TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson, Distinguished Permanent Representatives,

On behalf of the Government of Mexico, I would like to express our full support for H.E. Agustín Vásquez, Ambassador of El Salvador, as Chairperson of the Executive Council, with the hope that his experience and leadership will ensure that the deliberations of this august Executive Council reach a satisfactory conclusion.

Likewise, I wish to convey our full confidence in the professional activities carried out by the Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Fernando Arias, and the staff of the Technical Secretariat; these efforts are aimed at pursuing the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention. In this regard, I welcome the detailed report of the Director-General on the progress made in implementing the Convention.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement communicated on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC) and, in its national capacity, highlights the challenge facing the Chairmanship of the Executive Council to fortify the new normal of confronting the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, we welcome the Bureau of this Council and the Secretariat, and their ability to adapt to make it possible to hold this Ninety-Fourth Session of the Council. This new context demands that the States Parties intensify international cooperation in all aspects in order to surmount the challenges in our near future.

Mexico is committed to the noble causes in defence of international peace and security, and as such has launched an intensive and successful campaign to obtain a non-permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council, from which it hopes to provide an impetus for, among other things, the universality of the Convention, as well as the implementation of the obligations that constitute ‘compelling law’ and that stem from this international instrument.

At the same time, on behalf of the Government of Mexico, I wish to take advantage of the opportunity to welcome all of the States Parties for their valuable support, which helped us obtain this honourable position; we will perform this role with a high sense of responsibility.

The Government of Mexico calls upon all States parties to fulfil their international obligations under the Convention and urges States Parties to accelerate their efforts to destroy their chemical arsenals and without any more delays, so that we will be able to achieve complete elimination before 2023. Likewise, we recognise the tenacity with which Japan has been cooperating in order to identify and eliminate the chemical weapons abandoned in China.



My delegation has noted that the Secretariat, in its reports on the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons, has focused on three aspects:

1. Follow-up on the work of the Declaration Assessment Team: My delegation observes with concern the existence of inconsistencies and contradictions, which do not preclude this State Party from its responsibility. Although there is appreciation for the political will of the Syrian Government as demonstrated during the twenty-second round of consultations, it is necessary that it shows more openness in collaborating with the OPCW.
2. The investigations of the Fact-Finding Mission into the various incidents that took place between 2017 and 2019 on Syrian territory: This Council is still awaiting the results of the respective analyses, and the results of the analyses of the samples collected from the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) locations in Barzah and Jamrayah (Syrian Arab Republic).
3. The implementation of the decision adopted by the Conference of the States Parties entitled “Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use” (C-SS-4/DEC.3, dated 27 June 2018):

Mexico supports the work of the Technical Secretariat, the Declaration Assessment team, and the Director-General, which are all aimed at the sole objective of making progress in the total elimination of chemical weapons, in an impartial and independent manner.

As States Parties to the Convention, we must defend its integrity, strengthen the Organisation, and demand implementation of the Convention, without losing sight of the fact that the international community and the victims are hoping that this type of weapon will never be used again. For the Government of Mexico, the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstances is inadmissible and unjustifiable; we condemn the development, possession, and use or threat of use of this type of weapon.

We respectfully trust that the authorities of the Syrian Arab Republic truly wish to fulfil all of their international obligations under the Convention and clarify, without delay, all of the inaccuracies in its initial declaration. In that same tone, we hope that they will not pose any obstacles to the members of the Fact-Finding Mission or the Declaration Assessment Team, and that they will facilitate access in order to ensure the conduct of the relevant investigations into the incidents of alleged use of chemical weapons, as well as the collection of every type of relevant sample in order to complement the respective investigations.

With regard to the programmes on assistance, protection, and international cooperation developed by the Technical Secretariat, my country notes that these are key in ensuring that chemicals are used for the good of humankind. For this reason, we are in favour of continuing capacity-building activities for the States Parties, bearing in mind regional priorities, such as in Africa’s case.

In this regard, I will note that the National Authority of Mexico will be presenting a report on progress with regard to the action plan to enhance the Regional Cooperation Programme during the twenty-first meeting of GRULAC National Authorities, which will be held virtually on 30 July 2020.

I would like to reiterate Mexico's full support for the commitment of the OPCW Secretariat to establish a Centre for Chemistry and Technology that will facilitate the education of new experts and expand the capacities of the States Parties to tackle the challenges posed by the dramatic changes that we are all experiencing.

The complex situation that is currently facing multilateralism is a call to all States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to search for ways within international law to defend our legal framework and ensure that it is respected, and that if there are any transgressions on that front, that political and legal tools are used to demand the perpetrator's compliance with international obligations—be it a State Party or a non-State actor—and hold it accountable in an effective manner.

Mexico urges all States Parties to make the Convention a vital instrument, and to make the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons an example in the fight for disarmament in general. In fortifying the Organisation, we ensure that scientific and technological advances will serve as a support in maintaining peace—not destroying it.

I kindly request that this statement be considered a public and official document of this session and published on the Organisation's external server and official website.

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