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SPAIN

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE KINGDOM OF SPAIN TO THE
OPCW AT THE NINETY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

Spain aligns itself with the statement by the European Union published for this Ninety-Fifth Session of the Executive Council.

First of all, my delegation would like to express appreciation for the effective work of Council Chairperson, H.E. Mr Agustín Gómez Vásquez, who has taken on this role with a spirit of duty and service in the very challenging conditions caused by the pandemic; his efficient work already began to bear fruit during the prior Council session, at which the report was successfully adopted, and he continuously searched for agreements and ways to overcome differences at the heart of the Organisation.

After joining the Executive Council last May, Spain has been working loyally together with its European Union partners towards two main objectives: the fulfilment of the obligations set out in the Convention, and support for Director-General Fernando Arias and the Technical Secretariat so that they are able to carry out the mandate that the 193 members of the OPCW have bestowed upon them and which can be summarised in just one phrase: a world completely free of chemical weapons.

Following the inclusion of the Novichok family of chemical agents in the Annex on Chemicals prohibited by the Convention, many countries believed that instances such as the regrettable Salisbury attack two years ago would have definitively remained a thing of the past and would not be repeated. Unfortunately, this hope did not end up as our reality. And today we are facing a new poisoning, that of Mr Navalny.

Spain does not prejudge the perpetrators of the attack, nor the form of accusations against any State or non-State entity. This is a matter that is under investigation, and the definitive conclusions will take some time. Nevertheless, there are three certain facts: the chemical agent used is in the Novichok family; the victim is a Russian national who belongs to the political opposition; and the attack took place on the territory of the Russian Federation.

These facts cannot and must not be ignored, and for this reason the Government of the Russian Federation has the unavoidable responsibility to conduct an honest, exhaustive, and transparent investigation into the matter. Spain, consequently, requests that the Russian

* Reissued in English for technical reasons.



Federation conduct an extensive investigation and employ all necessary human and technical resources, and that it share all information obtained with the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the German Government.

Furthermore, my delegation believes that the Russian Government would be the main party interested in clarifying what happened, which is why the investigation—which not only Spain, but the international community is requesting—must be carried out as soon as possible.

Spain does not want to neglect to express its support and solidarity to our friend, partner, and ally Germany, which has taken on an enormous responsibility for such a serious matter. My delegation also wishes to express our sympathies to Mr Navalny, and we wish him a full recovery so that he is able to return to his usual activities as soon as possible.

After carefully examining and considering the text there, Spain has decided to co-sponsor the draft decision presented by the delegation of the United States of America, which seeks to include aerosolised central nervous system-acting chemicals used for law enforcement and riot control purposes in the annex of prohibited chemicals.

Naturally, my country does not oppose the use of said chemicals for medical and scientific purposes.

With this support for the United States' initiative, Spain wishes to reiterate the willingness that it expressed at the start of this national statement: the fervent wish for a world free of chemical weapons.

We trust that this draft decision will enjoy the consensus necessary to modify the annex of prohibited chemicals as described in a relatively short period of time.

Spain would like to reiterate its concerns regarding the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. We continue to confirm that there has been little to no cooperation on the part of the Government of Damascus with the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation in terms of everything concerning the declaration and inspection of its chemical arsenal.

The use of chemical weapons constitutes a threat to the international community, which is why obstacles hindering the work of the investigation are not acceptable. Spain supports the Technical Secretariat and the Director-General in all of their efforts aimed at achieving full compliance of the Syrian authorities with the Convention, with the ultimate goal of destroying any and all traces of chemical weapons in that country.

In addition to the lack of cooperation from the authorities of Damascus with the Technical Secretariat with regard to its declaration and inspection, we must not forget the work of the Fact-Finding Mission and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) in the Syrian Arab Republic. As became clear after the decision that was adopted at the Ninety-Fourth Session of the Executive Council in July, Syria must respond to the attacks carried out by its Air Force in Ltamenah. My delegation expects to see a report from the Technical Secretariat on the response of the Syrian Government to the facts established by the IIT as soon as possible, and trusts that the next Conference of the States Parties will adopt the measures necessary against the Syrian regime in order to ensure that these types of incidents do not ever happen again.

The ability of the OPCW to confront the challenges posed by scientific and technological advances and the risk of the terrorist use of chemical agents depends on the maintenance and improvement of the OPCW's capacities in terms of human and material resources. For this

reason, support for projects such as the new Centre for Chemistry and Technology is of special importance, as it will contribute to the OPCW being in better condition to meet its commitments, including the ability to support its Member States if the need arises. We urge those Member States that are in the position to do so, to continue making voluntary contributions for this purpose.

The Convention and the OPCW constitute one of the pillars upon which the international system of non-proliferation rests. The obligations of all the countries that make up the Convention are to protect and improve the non-proliferation structure. We have seen the most progress in the field of chemical weapons, as well as its areas of declaration, inspection, control, and destruction. But there is still much to do, and from here the Organisation requires our continued assistance in order to reach its goals. Yet the Organisation cannot function without an adequate budgetary foundation, and for this reason, my delegation requests that all States Parties support the Draft Budget that the Director-General will be submitting at the next Conference of the States Parties for approval.

Finally, Mr Chairperson, Spain would like to reiterate its support and express its full confidence in the work being carried out by the Technical Secretariat, the IIT Coordinator Ambassador Oñate, and the Director-General Fernando Arias. We congratulate them all on their work, and we encourage them to continue on the path they have started on in future. We would also like to express our appreciation to the Director-General for the contact he has maintained with the Spanish authorities in Madrid. His meetings with His Majesty the King and the Minister of Foreign Affairs has made it possible to renew Spain's support for the work of the OPCW and to reiterate our concern regarding some of the issues that we have addressed here in this statement, and which could affect the non-proliferation of chemical weapons.

My delegation kindly requests that this national statement be considered an official document of the Ninety-Fifth Session of the Executive Council and included on the Organisation's external server and website.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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