



OPCW

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GUATEMALA

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA TO
THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

To start, please allow me to congratulate you on the work you have carried out at the head of this Executive Council. I would reiterate that you have the unconditional support of my delegation to ensure that under your leadership, the sittings of this Ninety-Fifth Session will be productive.

Both you and the team gathered here today, ready to work, deserve our recognition and gratitude, as you have figured out how to overcome the vicissitudes imposed upon us by the global pandemic and the necessary containment measures that have been adopted by the countries. This is in addition to the inherent challenges posed by our subject matter, which regrettably is becoming more complex with every passing day.

My delegation also welcomes the reports by the Director-General and the work carried out over the course of the intersessional period by the facilitators, co-facilitators, and the Technical Secretariat.

My delegation vehemently condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstance. There is no justification whatsoever for their use, and in the case that it happens, it cannot remain unpunished. It is up to the international community to carry out justice for those who continue to use chemicals as weapons, and to use the mechanisms that this same international community has legitimately and legally established for said purpose.

Guatemala regrets the latest incidents in which chemical agents were allegedly used against the civil population and is attentively awaiting the results of the investigations that have been conducted into these matters, following irrefutable and impartial scientific criteria.

We call upon the international community to redouble its efforts in combating this threat in order to prevent it and defend the regime of the Convention. We strongly believe that cooperation among the States is the only way to achieve this goal.

Achieving universality of the Convention should continue to be a priority for the OPCW. Through this objective, the restrictions against the use of chemical weapons are strengthened, and the resurgence thereof is prevented via the universalisation of its implementation at a global level. As a State Party to the Convention and a facilitator of achieving universality, Guatemala



calls upon the States that are not yet a part of this regime to ratify or accede to the Convention as soon as possible and without any preconditions. In taking this step, they will be confirming their commitment to international peace and security. In this same vein, Guatemala welcomes the efforts of the Director-General and the work of the Technical Secretariat in the intersessional period aimed at the effective implementation of the Action Plan for the Universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

With regard to the agenda for this session of the Executive Council, I would like to touch on certain aspects:

First, with regard to the use of chemical weapons and chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, any effort made to prevent, investigate, and condemn the use of chemical weapons must continue in accordance with impartial, scientific, and unobjectionable provisions. We reiterate our support for the activities connected to the work of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), which are conducted in line with the provisions stated above.

We encourage the Technical Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic to continue their dialogue and cooperation in spite of the recent incidents related to the COVID-19 pandemic. We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to provide the Technical Secretariat with all of the technical information required and to clarify any outstanding question regarding its initial declaration.

Second, concerning the Draft Programme and Budget for 2021, please allow me to express our gratitude for the Technical Secretariat and the co-facilitators for presenting a budget in which the positions of the States Parties have been considered, particularly those with regard to the formulation of a Draft Programme and Budget with zero nominal growth, the effect of which was necessary to plan for economic measures and savings in order to find a financing mechanism to cover each and every task undertaken by the Organisation, including taking into account the contingencies related to the COVID-19 pandemic, thus reflecting the fiscal reality facing the States Parties.

Third, it is the wish of this delegation that the Organisation return to the path of consensus and take a step back from the chronic politicisation and polarisation of its work. We are concerned that this polarisation is paralysing the Organisation ahead of a juncture at which we will have to take swift action against the resurgence of the use of chemicals as weapons by non-State actors, among others. The recent instances of the use of chemicals as weapons against civilians—both suspected and confirmed—are urgent alarms that the Organisation cannot ignore; we must redirect our attention to protecting the regime of the Convention.

It is on this note, Mr Chairperson, that we request that the States involved in developing controversies act in good faith to search for and find solutions to their differences via the most expeditious route, so that we may return to collaborative work moving in only one direction: that of the prohibition of chemical weapons and the advancement of chemistry for non-prohibited purposes.

We trust that this august Council, under the guidance of its Chairperson and with the support of the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat, as well as all the States Parties and members thereof, will achieve the goals set out in the agenda as desirable results for this session.

Mr Chairperson, we request that this statement be considered an official document of this Ninety-Fifth Session of the Council and published on the Organisation's external server and its website.

Thank you.

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