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**VENEZUELA**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HAIFA AISSAMI MADAH  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOLIVARIAN  
REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA TO THE OPCW  
AT THE NINETY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,  
Mr Director-General,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,

The Venezuelan delegation would like to extend its greetings to H.E. Agustín Vásquez Gómez, Permanent Representative of the Republic of El Salvador, and again welcome him at the helm of the work of the Ninety-Fifth Session of the Executive Council. We reiterate our commitment to working dutifully towards the common objectives of the Organisation.

Likewise, we welcome and recognise the work of H.E. Fernando Arias and his reports; we also express our recognition of the work of all of the members of the Technical Secretariat, particularly under these difficult and complex conditions.

We would like to once again address the unprecedented nature of this session of the Council, like that of past Council sessions taking place under the extraordinary conditions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, while underscoring that these exceptions cannot set a precedent for the future work of our Organisation. Thus, we call for the continued search for more inclusive mechanisms and technological platforms that will make it possible to participate under equal conditions for interacting at Executive Council sessions for all States Parties, including Observer States, without limiting their ability to exercise their rights, but while observing health and distancing regulations imposed due to the pandemic.

Venezuela aligns itself with the statement by H.E. Fikrat Akhundov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the OPCW, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

We recognise and welcome the work of the various facilitations and working groups at the heart of the OPCW, and we would like to congratulate in particular H.E. Vusumuzi Philemon Madonsela, Permanent Representative of South Africa, on his recent appointment as head of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism.



We underscore the fact that the destruction of chemical weapons is the top, fundamental priority of the Organisation, which is why we insist that the United States of America, the only possessor State Party, accelerate the necessary measures to finalise the destruction of its declared stockpile in an expedited, safe manner in order to ensure its compliance with the provisions of the Convention and the relevant decisions of the regulatory bodies of the Organisation.

With regard to the elimination and destruction of Syrian chemical weapons and the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons production facilities, we welcome the reports of the Director-General and recognise the cooperation maintained by the Syrian Arab Republic with the Technical Secretariat, while we reiterate and urge it to continue successfully, without any type of external interference and with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria.

The implementation of some of the pillars of the Convention continue to be unfinished tasks for this Organisation; Venezuela reiterates the need to make progress and achieve concrete objectives in the implementation of the provisions of Article XI in relation to the economic and technological development of the States Parties, as this is one of the pillars of the Convention, the implementation of which continues to be delayed in spite of its importance for all States Parties.

We highlight the need to promote international cooperation for the benefit of all States Parties via the transfer of technology, material, and equipment for peaceful purposes in the field of chemistry, and the elimination of any discriminatory restrictions; in this regard we call for the refutation of the coercive, unilateral measures against other States Parties, which are contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Convention, and which affect its long-term viability and have a detrimental impact on the development of countries that, like ours, are seriously affected by such arbitrary, unilateral sanctions.

The strongest possible condemnation of the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as weapons anywhere, by anyone, and under any circumstances is the principled position of Venezuela.

Our country expresses its profound concern regarding the repeated existing practice of attempts to accuse States Parties of the use of chemical weapons based on accusations, without substantiated facts, via reports spread by the media, social networks, or any other open source of information, including some non-governmental organisations. This trend could set a dangerous precedent for the future work of the OPCW.

Within this context, our efforts should be aimed at improving the efficacy of the OPCW's activities in terms of addressing cases of alleged use of chemical weapons, and it is imperative that all approaches be applied strictly within the framework of this Convention. This means maintaining and strengthening this multilateral instrument, which is of great importance in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament.

With regard to the use of aerosolised central nervous system-acting chemicals (CNS-acting chemicals) for law enforcement purposes, we find it imperative to continue the discussions and debate from a constructive standpoint, primarily within the policy-making organs of the Organisation. It is fundamental that all States Parties have sufficient information allowing them to be familiarised with the scope of all of its technical and legal aspects before taking any

specific action. For this reason, we advocate for the search for a consensus and a dialogue among all States Parties, which will make it possible to put into place the conditions necessary to take consensus-based decisions as our way of working, without giving in to the temptation to force a vote through, which would only cause greater polarisation within our Organisation.

We reaffirm once again the need to defend the principles set out in the Convention, safeguarding the technical essence of this Organisation and preserving this multilateral space that is so important for disarmament and the non-proliferation of chemical weapons in the world.

Finally, Mr Chairperson, I kindly request that this statement be considered an official document of the Ninety-Fifth Session of the Executive Council and made available on the Organisation's website.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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