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COSTA RICA

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF COSTA RICA
TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

Costa Rica wishes to thank Ambassador Krassimir Kostov of Bulgaria for his efforts and diligence as Chairperson of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, as well as the Chairperson of the Executive Council, Ambassador Agustín Vásquez of El Salvador, for his dedicated and committed work managing the preparations for this session.

Likewise, we express our kindred and sincere congratulations to Ambassador José Antonio Zabalgoitia Trejo of Mexico on his election as Chairperson of this Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference; we reiterate that he has the support and constructive commitment of our delegation in leading its work.

Costa Rica also welcomes the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, and his team for the intense and productive work conducted over the course of this year towards the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”), which is clearly reflected in his report. We would like to give special recognition to the quick, effective, and timely responses that have made it possible to continue on with the Organisation’s programme of work within the context of the pandemic, and we value the continuous improvement based on lessons learned.

We also underscore the importance that our country assigns to the actions that incorporate the perspective of gender and geographic diversity at the Organisation. We recognise the progress made in this area and call for the continued incorporation of this approach in a way that is integral at all levels and areas across the Organisation.

We also wish to express our gratitude to the facilitators of the working groups for their persistent work towards making substantive progress with the various pillars of the Convention.

The Convention has made a significant contribution to collective efforts aimed at preventing the use and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Our work within the framework of the Convention clearly contributes to the strong conviction that sustainable development, security, and peace will also find a foundation in disarmament.



As a disarmed democracy that is loyally committed to peace, Costa Rica categorically condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstances, and recalls the commitment of all States to meet the obligations of global chemical disarmament, without excuses or delays, in implementing the provisions of the Convention.

Costa Rica makes a resounding call for the Convention to continue responding appropriately to new and emergent threats, while maintaining humankind as the main focus of our efforts.

Costa Rica advocates for the universality of the Convention and the prompt finalisation of the destruction of declared chemical weapons. Likewise, my country recognises that the Organisation must be prepared to put a stop to the re-emergence of chemical weapons.

In the collective interest of peace and justice, we strongly support the adoption of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 on addressing the threat from chemical weapons use, and in this regard, we welcome the presentation of the first report by the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) of the OPCW Technical Secretariat on 8 April this year, confirming the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

On this matter, we underscore our firm support for and confidence in the impartiality, professionalism, and independence of the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the IIT, and we emphasise the determination of our country to have those who have used chemical weapons identified and held responsible for their crimes.

Likewise, we eagerly received report EC-96/DG.1, dated 14 October 2020, regarding the implementation of decision EC-94/DEC.2 on the possession and use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic, and in this regard we express our deep concern about its content, which acknowledges the lack of cooperation by this State Party in resolving and declaring outstanding matters.

For this reason, it is imperative that this Conference adopt prompt measures and, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, guarantee the full implementation thereof. Correspondingly, we support actions on other platforms to ensure that the perpetrators are held accountable.

Costa Rica regrets and once again condemns the increase in reports on the use of chemical weapons. It is with great dismay that we have borne witness in this year of 2020 to the use of “novichok” nerve agents against Alexei Navalny, as was confirmed by three designated laboratories and by the OPCW itself. This crime must be investigated, without excuses or delay, with the aim of putting an end to impunity.

On the Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare, Costa Rica paid homage and expressed its solidarity with the victims of the use of chemical weapons and, as a country that defends international law as the foundation of international peace and security, my country reiterates that it will continue to promote effective multilateralism in order to strengthen the disarmament and non-proliferation regime as well as an international norms-based system.

Likewise, my country remains concerned about the possibility that States might use aerosolised central nervous system-acting chemicals. Today, studies have concluded that this category of chemical is not appropriate for use in law enforcement. We support the development of a constructive dialogue on the draft decision on an understanding regarding the aerosolised use of central nervous system-acting chemicals for law enforcement purposes, and we hope that action can be taken on this matter very soon.

Capacity building is essential to ensure that all countries are able to fulfil their obligations under the Convention and, at the same time, that they are able to reap the benefits of new developments in science and technology. Costa Rica is highly committed to strengthening ties in international cooperation, economic and technological development, and to promoting the use of chemistry for peaceful purposes, including programmes for women in chemistry and green chemistry.

We would also highlight the support from the Costa Rica Fire Department, in coordination with the OPCW, in conducting an online course on assistance and protection for Latin America and the Caribbean from 2 to 6 November this year.

Costa Rica welcomes the progress made on the project to build the OPCW's new laboratory—the ChemTech Centre—and expresses its appreciation to the countries that have pledged support. The ChemTech Centre is not only a symbol of a multilateral Organisation looking to the future, but will also be an essential component providing cooperation in capacity-building efforts in science and technology, resulting in the economic development of the States Parties to the Convention, while we approach the achievement of the objective of the destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles and focus on other challenges concerning peace and security.

Finally, our delegation finds it crucial and imperative to approve the draft budget, which will guarantee the resources necessary to fulfil the mandates of the Organisation, and in this spirit, my country endeavours to stay abreast of its financial obligations every year.

Mr Chairperson, thank you for your attention, and I request that this statement be considered an official document of the Conference and published on the extranet and website.

Thank you.

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