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PERU

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MARISOL AGÜERO COLUNGA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF PERU
TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson, Ambassador José Antonio Zabalgoitia, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the OPCW,

I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairperson of this Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties of the OPCW, representing the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. Likewise, I will take the time to express the full support of the delegation of Peru for your management, and our confidence that your leadership will satisfactorily guide the development of our work at this Conference, which is taking place in unique circumstances due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Likewise, I extend my gratitude to Ambassador Krassimir Kostov for the excellent work conducted as Chairperson of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

Furthermore, we express our appreciation for the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, the Technical Secretariat, and the Bureau for all of the efforts made to hold the Conference of the States Parties in two sessions, with the aim of minimising as much as possible the risk of contagion.

We also welcome the full report of the Director-General presented at this session, and we reiterate our full support for the decisions that make it possible for the Technical Secretariat to continue carrying out the implementation of the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the Non-Aligned Movement and China, with the exception of paragraph 13 of said statement, which refers to Syria's cooperation with the OPCW.

Peru reiterates its profound concern surrounding the use of nerve agents against Russian citizen Alexei Navalny, which has been confirmed by the OPCW technical assistance mission requested by Germany.

My country condemns the use of chemical weapons anywhere and under any circumstances, and believes it to be of the utmost importance that an investigation be conducted in order to clarify the incident in which Mr Navalny was poisoned. In this regard, we note the request of the Russian Federation for technical assistance from the OPCW within the framework of the Executive Council made this past October, and we hope to see it manifest as soon as possible.



On the other hand, Peru once again expresses its full support for the work of the Technical Secretariat in the Syrian Arab Republic, especially the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). With reference to the most recent reports by the DAT, we regret that there has not yet been any resolution of the gaps and inconsistencies in the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic in spite of the meetings held with the Director-General of the OPCW within the framework of the Structured Dialogue on this matter.

The first report of the IIT was published in April this year and concluded that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Syrian Air Force is responsible for the use of chemical weapons in the incidents that took place on 24, 25, and 30 March 2017 in the city of Ltamenah (Syrian Arab Republic).

In this regard, the Executive Council, at its session in July this year, adopted a decision recommending that this Conference of the States Parties apply Article XII of the Chemical Weapons Convention, concerning measures to ensure compliance in the event that Syria does not declare the chemical weapons that it currently has or fails to resolve outstanding matters concerning the initial declaration of its chemical weapons programme.

According to the Director-General, the Syrian Arab Republic has not met these requirements within the agreed time frame, which is regrettably why the Conference must consider applying Article XII of the Convention. Peru believes that the decision adopted in July by the Executive Council was an opportunity for the Syrian Arab Republic to clarify all discrepancies and provide information on the chemical weapons used in Ltamenah by the established deadline.

We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to engage in effective cooperation with the OPCW that will bear positive results as soon as possible in order to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria, and thus contribute to ruling out impunity for the flagrant violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the standards of international law.

With regard to the budget of the Organisation, Peru supports the adoption of the draft budget that provides for a special fund to tackle the challenges that the work of the OPCW faces due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, my delegation reiterates the importance of having the international cooperation resources that have been diverted to the COVID-19 fund returned to the regular budget once the emergency health situation has ceased.

We also appreciate that the workshop on international cooperation under Article XI took place this past 2 November, providing information on the development of guidelines for the prevention of accidents when handling chemicals; these will soon be available to the States Parties. We trust that these guidelines will serve as an extremely useful tool for our countries and an important reference to take into account in prevention and in protecting our people.

I would like to request, Mr Chairperson, that this statement be considered an official document of this session.

Thank you.

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