



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

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SPAIN

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE KINGDOM OF SPAIN
TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,

Spain aligns itself with the declaration made by the European Union at this Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

This year's Conference is taking place under extremely challenging conditions resulting from the pandemic that has been afflicting us for nearly one year. For this reason, my delegation would like to express its special appreciation to Director-General Fernando Arias and to the staff of the Technical Secretariat for their work over all these months, maintaining the Organisation and keeping it functioning under such complicated circumstances. My delegation would also like to express its gratitude for the initiatives of the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat towards achieving gender parity across the Organisation's management, as well as fostering work-life balance and gender perspective across all levels of the OPCW.

Likewise, my delegation acknowledges the efforts of Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bulgaria Mr Krassimir Kostov, Chairperson of the previous Conference, and welcomes Ambassador José Antonio Zabalgoitia of Mexico as Chairperson of this session of the Conference, to whom we wish every success.

Spain reiterates its full confidence in the OPCW Technical Secretariat. Its professionalism, impartiality, independence, and technical competence are beyond a shadow of a doubt and, consequently, my delegation rejects the unfounded attacks and criticism that the Technical Secretariat is receiving from some Member States.

Spain reiterates that the use of chemical weapons by a State or any other entity is unacceptable anywhere, at any moment, and under any circumstance. This not only constitutes a violation of the Convention—which all of us present here have voluntarily accepted—it is also a grave offence against human rights. For this reason, the perpetrators of any attack involving chemical weapons must be held accountable for their actions and be brought to justice.

It is with great concern that Spain has followed the attack that Mr Alexei Navalny suffered this past August on the territory of the Russian Federation in which a novichok chemical agent was used. Spain urges the Russian Federation to investigate in depth the facts and circumstances that allowed this attack to take place, and to cooperate fully with the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation in order to totally clarify this regrettable affair.



At the same time, Spain expresses its sympathy, support, and solidarity with Germany, which has become involved in this very serious matter.

Spain condemns the attacks with chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and calls upon the perpetrators of these unacceptable acts to be held accountable for their crimes as soon as possible, and brought to justice by tribunal. According to the content of the first of the reports issued by the Investigation and Identification Team of the OPCW, it has been proven that the Syrian Governmental authorities bear the responsibility for the use of chemical weapons against their own people.

Syria continues not to fulfil the mandate assigned to it by the Organisation's Executive Council decision this past 9 July on its responsibility for the use of chemical weapons. It has allowed the 90 days set out in this decision to pass without taking any action. My delegation urges the Syrian authorities to meet strict compliance with the terms of said decision.

My country not only voted in favour of the draft decision, but also acted as a co-sponsor of said draft decision with a large group of like-minded Member States.

Spain completely supports the sanctions imposed by the European Union on a significant number of Syrian officials and scientists for their responsibility in the development, production, and use of chemical weapons, and will support in future as many actions as necessary to definitively eradicate chemical weapons from that country.

At this Part I of the Conference of the States Parties, the most important agenda item will be the approval of the 2021 Budget. My delegation supports the draft presented by the Director-General, Fernando Arias, and will vote in favour. Spain asks all Member States of the Organisation to approve the draft budget presented by the Director-General. It is a balanced, austere budget aligned with the economic circumstances that we are currently dealing with and, at the same time, it is a document that will allow the Organisation to continue working throughout the course of 2021. Spain believes that the OPCW is a basic, fundamental tool within the global non-proliferation mechanism and, consequently, it will continue to lend its economic support in future via its statutory and voluntary contributions and urges other Member States to take a similar approach.

My delegation requests that this statement be considered an official document of the Conference and published on the Organisation's external server and website.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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