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English

**Statement of H.E. Gladys Maria Gutierrez Alvarado, Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the OPCW in response to the statement of the delegation of the United States of America at the 98th session of the Executive Council of the OPCW
The Hague, 5-8 October 2021**

The Permanent Representation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela categorically rejects the questionings contained in the declaration of the United States of America, which threaten the sovereignty of a full member of the OPCW and therefore, condemns it.

Such actions constitute a continuous attempt to use the Organization, in an effort to impose political interests that have nothing to do with the object and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention or the mandate of the Organization, and State Parties should avoid such inappropriate actions.

The Representation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela before the OPCW once again wishes to emphasize the principle that States, in their international relations, must refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Venezuela as a free and sovereign country only responds to its People on her internal affairs. The legitimate Government of Venezuela is headed by President Nicolás Maduro, who was constitutionally elected on 20 May 2018 with 68 percent of the votes cast in those elections, which were witnessed by 120 international observers. Therefore, the only lawful and legitimate representation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela before the OPCW is that exercised by its Permanent Representative.

The recent Report of the United Nations, published on 12 February 2021, that refers to the preliminary conclusions of the visit by the United Nations Special Rapporteur to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, considering the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures in the enjoyment of human rights in our country, shows the absolute and full recognition of the national parliamentary elections held in Venezuela on 6 December 2020. This fact confirms the democratic nature of the Venezuelan institutional system, in this case of its representative part, derived from citizen vote.

The United States of America applies a double standard, classifying all nations according to how they align with its imperialist interests. In the case of Venezuela, which determinedly assumes principles like the defense of her sovereignty and vast natural resources; independence of public powers without attending to external interference; a

social agenda that benefits the People, and a respectful foreign policy with all nations, the US automatically considers her an enemy, applying a policy of harassment. Venezuela will not take lessons of democracy from the US, taking in account that that country suffers structural problems such as xenophobia, racism and classism, among others.

In addition to the fact outlined above, the statement of the United States delegation is reprehensible, in the sense of stating that its Government seeks solutions to "alleviate the suffering of the Venezuelan people", when it is precisely that Government responsible for progressively implementing an economic blockade, from 2014 to the present, against the entirety of Venezuela, with illegal actions that have caused the same suffering the delegation now expresses wants to alleviate.

Finally, it is also a notorious and a publicly known fact that the strategy of the US Executive to overthrow the legitimate Government of Venezuela, through its attempt to replace the Head of State by an agent serving the interests of the United States, has failed since 2019. To claim that the State Parties of a multilateral institution, aware of the principles on which International Law is based, including that of non-intervention and respect for the sovereignty of the States, assume this attempt as legitimate, demonstrates the US's underestimation towards the State Parties, as well as its blundering in diplomatic matters.

The Permanent Representation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela requests that this statement be considered an official document of the **98th session of the Executive Council** and be published on both the external server and on the Organization's public website.-