



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-Fifth Session
20 – 22 April 2021 (Part II)

C-25/NAT.95
20 April 2021
ENGLISH only

BRAZIL

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PAULO ROBERTO CAMINHA DE CASTILHOS FRANÇA PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES

Mr Chairperson,

This is the first meeting of the Conference of the States Parties of the OPCW in which I have the honour to address this body. First of all, please accept our congratulations, Ambassador José Antonio Zabalgoitia, for the outstanding work you are doing ahead of the Conference. Since my arrival, last December, I have followed with admiration the extensive amount of preparatory work, consultations and arrangements put in place by you to ensure that we could be here today, carrying out the responsibilities we have taken when acceding to the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”). In those continuing efforts, you and the Vice-Chairpersons, to whom I extend our praise, can count on the full support of the delegation of Brazil.

I also take this opportunity to greet the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, the Deputy Director-General, Ambassador Odette Melono, the other directors and all the staff of the Technical Secretariat. Without their dedication and their willingness to move forward, even amidst the most challenging conditions, it would not be possible for us to be here today discussing so many important issues. Brazil fully appreciates their commitment and extends its full support and availability to engage with the Secretariat on any matter of relevance.

Brazil has presented a national statement to the Twenty-Fifth Conference of the States Parties Part I (C-25/NAT.20), to which I would like to add a few remarks.

As it is well known, Brazil unequivocally and vehemently condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances. It is with utmost concern that we have received reports by the Secretariat on consistent acts of violation to the primary rule set out by the Convention - the prohibition of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons regardless of whether they are listed in the annex or not.

For Brazil, the Convention is the gold standard of all multilateral regimes on weapons of mass destruction, and it builds on a prohibition that dates back almost a hundred years, set out in the 1925 Geneva Protocol. Unfortunately, over recent years, the chemical weapons regime—of which the Convention is the mainstay—has been progressively weakened by recurring incidents of use of chemical weapons.



Brazil understands that such occurrences constitute violations of international law and serious threats to international security, and as such they must be addressed with transparency and be subject to thorough and impartial investigations, in accordance with the Convention.

It is our view that the role of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW in clarifying these incidents is irreplaceable. Its capacity to do so should be protected and, where necessary, continuously improved.

Mr Chairperson, throughout the years in which the issue of the use of chemical weapons in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic has been discussed in the OPCW, Brazil has consistently underscored that all investigations must be impartial, balanced, technically sound and comprehensive. Brazil has carefully studied the reports issued by the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) on incidents related to the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. These reports contain ample evidence of recurrent use of chemical weapons in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

In this and in all other recent instances of use of chemical weapons, the only acceptable solution is for all States Parties concerned to comply fully with their obligations under the Convention, in particular by providing accurate information to the OPCW, and by working transparently and collaboratively with its Technical Secretariat in order to clarify any outstanding issues.

Only through cooperation and dialogue, will this Organisation be able to stem the worrying trend of erosion of the cogent norm against the use of chemical weapons.

In our previous statement to this session of the Conference of the States Parties, Brazil has reiterated its long-standing position regarding the fundamental importance of international cooperation to the present and future of the OPCW. We note with satisfaction that, in the meantime, the drafting committee of the list of ideas emerged from the “Review and Evaluation Workshop of the Components of an Agreed Framework for the Full Implementation of Article XI” has met for the first time. We hope that the mechanism will enable fruitful discussions and pave the way for the advancement of the implementation of the related provisions of the Convention.

Brazil acknowledges the ongoing discussions on a number of relevant subjects, ranging from the amendment of the tenure policy to the convening of emergency meetings of the Executive Council in extraordinary circumstances. We welcome the engagement of a large part of the membership on those debates, as any action taken will affect all of us. As the consultations gain strength, it is paramount that we aim at achieving consensus. Such principle has guided the decision-making process in the OPCW until very recently and is the key for the return of a better understanding among us, the States Parties.

In that connection, it is regrettable that, in this shortened meeting, we are poised to take decisions by vote on as many as three agenda items, including some of a purely administrative nature. Brazil urges all States Parties to make every effort to reverse this worrying trend of divisiveness and steer this Organisation back to its long-standing practice of decision making by consensus, which is a necessary condition for effective multilateralism. Thank you.