



OPCW

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ENGLISH and SPANISH only

EL SALVADOR

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR TO
THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson of the Executive Council,
Your Excellency, Mr Director-General,
Your Excellencies, Permanent Representatives,
Members and observers of the Executive Council,
Distinguished authorities of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons,

I dedicate my first words to congratulating you, Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki, on your election as Chairperson of the Executive Council. I have full confidence that the management of this first session and the work that we carry out during your mandate will allow us to achieve excellent results towards strengthening the OPCW and effectively implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention. El Salvador takes this opportunity to reaffirm its willingness to cooperate fully with your Chairmanship in order to achieve a successful outcome for the agenda of this Ninety-Seventh Session of the Executive Council.

We commend the efforts that you have made with the Bureau and the Director-General in preparation for this Executive Council, and we welcome the measures taken to safeguard the health and safety of the participants of this session, bearing in mind the current circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, in full compliance with the Convention, the practices of the Organisation, and the directions set out by the Dutch authorities.

In this regard, we value the initiative put forward by Germany regarding the establishment of an integral mechanism that would make it possible to hold sessions of the Executive Council in special circumstances via alternative, viable means and by making use of technological tools, with the aim of avoiding detaining or delaying the work of this important multilateral forum in compliance with the Rules of Procedure of the Council and the provisions of the Convention.

We highlight the dedication demonstrated by the Technical Secretariat to ensure that the functions and agenda of the Organisation continue to develop in a timely manner, in spite of the health crisis that we continue to face. In particular, we welcome the assistance and cooperation that has been provided to strengthen the capacities of the National Authorities and relevant institutions via virtual means with the objective of making process in properly implementing the Convention, disseminating pertinent information, and taking actions aimed at the adequate management of and best practices for the peaceful use of technology and chemicals.



My delegation appreciates the tremendous efforts made by the Director-General to ensure that the new OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology becomes a reality very soon. We are confident that the ChemTech Centre will be of great support and will contribute to more enriched participation among the Member States, in addition to fostering international cooperation, strengthening capacities, and making use of advances in science and technology to achieve a world free of chemical weapons.

My country is pleased to welcome the work carried out by the Ambassadors of Australia and Uruguay as co-facilitators of the organisational governance group, particularly with regard to the development of the tenure policy that will allow for flexibility when it comes to the length of service of Technical Secretariat staff when such is required and fully justified, with the aim of ensuring improved performance and efficiency in carrying out the Organisation's mandates.

Nevertheless, the decrease in the percentage of representation held by the region of Latin America and the Caribbean in Secretariat staff—currently a decline from 6.3% to 5.8%—is of great concern to El Salvador. For this reason, we request that the Secretariat develop effective, transparent mechanisms for the incorporation of professional, qualified team members within the OPCW, making it possible to ensure equal representation in terms of geographical diversity, while also boosting the focus on gender.

El Salvador joins the delegations that support actions aimed at strengthening the universality of the Convention, with the goal of progressing towards the complete and irreversible destruction of chemical weapons. Along this line, we reaffirm our vehement condemnation of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons against the civilian population by anyone and under any circumstances, as doing so constitutes a grave violation of the Convention and the norms of international law.

This brings us to express our concern surrounding the results of the investigations into the use of chemical weapons against the civilian population in the Syrian Arab Republic. On the other hand, we recognise the important efforts and progress made in the investigations that are under way in this area, and we hope that the collective efforts among all those involved and the OPCW will be maintained with the aim of clarifying these regrettable events.

In conclusion, my Government reiterates its commitment to strengthening the institutionalism of the OPCW. For this reason, El Salvador, as a member of the Council, will advocate for the search for dialogue and consensus among the States Parties in order to contribute to achieving the object and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

I kindly request that this statement be considered an official document of the Ninety-Seventh Session of the Executive Council and published on the Organisation's website and extranet.