



**OPCW**

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**CUBA**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SORAYA ÁLVAREZ NÚÑEZ  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE OPCW  
AT THE NINETY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,  
Mr Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,

The Cuban delegation would like to congratulate the new Chairperson of the Executive Council representing the African Group, H.E. Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki, and we wish him every success in managing our work. We also extend these congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

The Cuban delegation aligns itself with the statement read by H.E. Fikrat Akhundov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

We once again recognise the flexibility and cooperation demonstrated by the States Parties, and especially the observer States, in overcoming the serious obstacles resulting from exceptional procedures. In this regard, we hope that at the Ninety-Eighth Session of the Executive Council, we will be able to return to normal conditions in line with the usual procedures and regulations of the OPCW after overcoming the prevailing extraordinary work conditions put into place due to the COVID-19 pandemic over the past year and a half.

The destruction of remaining chemical weapons stockpiles should continue to be the highest priority for the OPCW. We reiterate our call for the possessor State to finalise said destruction process in an expedited, secure manner and in compliance with all the provisions of the Convention, its Verification Annex, and in full compliance with the relevant decisions that have been adopted.

Cuba is committed to the defence of every aspect of international assistance and cooperation, as they serve as the basic premise of multilateralism and are among the basic pillars of the Convention. This topic must have the greatest priority in the years to come, with a multifaceted, innovative approach, in order to respond to the new challenges that are emerging, in order to meet all obligations, and to enjoy the legitimate rights of all States Parties.

The Cuban delegation reiterates the call to maintain and broaden the successful cooperation sustained over time between the Technical Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic, without any external interference and with full respect for its sovereignty, as the only path towards finding a solution to outstanding matters and any other issues. The Convention clearly sets out



the norms and procedures for such. Threats and sanctions have proven ineffective as solutions for discrepancies; to the contrary, they contribute to a circle of violence and destruction.

We are seriously concerned about the negative trend pushed by one group of countries to continue politicising the work of the OPCW. It is our duty to preserve its technical mandate in line with the relevant provisions set out in the Chemical Weapons Convention. We reiterate the need to return to the practice of taking consensus-based decisions within the bodies of the OPCW.

At the same time, the Cuban delegation believes that the States Parties must foster the exchange of information and holding of consultations, in addition to abstaining from making accusations against other States Parties that have not been verified by the OPCW via established mechanisms and procedures in line with the provisions of the Convention.

Bearing in mind that the Advisory Body for Administrative and Financial Matters (ABAF) is comprised of open-ended membership and does not have decision-making authorities, we reiterate that the States Parties have the right to nominate the expert that they believe to be qualified and appropriate as a member of this Body; artificially created conditions and criteria that have nothing to do with the sovereign decision of any State Party are not acceptable.

The Cuban delegation supports the draft decision to be put forward for the consideration of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties regarding the use of central nervous system-acting (CNS-acting) chemicals for law enforcement purposes, given that the result is a general agreement among the States Parties based on an in-depth and thorough analysis conducted in the spirit of cooperation and consensus that should prevail within the Organisation.

With regard to the report presented by the facilitator for Article XI, the Cuban delegation welcomes this report and reiterates the importance of having the Technical Secretariat provide a complete report on the weaknesses and challenges in the effective implementation of decision C-16/DEC.10, dated 1 December 2011. We also note and recognise that the drafting committee within the Article XI facilitations has begun its work to simplify the list of ideas that are emerging from the review and evaluation workshops that have taken place in recent years. The progress that is being reported in this area in turn strengthens the facilitation efforts to achieve a document that could be considered by the OPCW's regulatory bodies and make steps forward in the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of all the provisions of the Convention.

This past 23 June at the United Nations General Assembly, the international community soundly rejected—for the twenty-ninth consecutive time—the imposition of the illegal economic, commercial, and financial embargo put in place by the United States of America against Cuba, exacerbated by the conditions of the pandemic. The numerous unilateral, coercive measures, which are markedly extra-territorial in nature and which this State Party is imposing against Cuba, hinders our people's ability to fully enjoy their human rights and constitutes the main obstacle blocking the sustainable development of our country. These restrictions negatively impact every facet of our society, including the development of chemistry for peaceful purposes, in blatant contradiction to the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The Cuban delegation denounces the fact that—contrary to the provisions set out in Article XI of the Convention—the United States have not adopted measures to examine national-level standards in the field of chemical trade in order to make them compatible with the object and purpose of the Convention; yet they continue to impose bans and put into place enormous

obstacles for trade, development, and the promotion of scientific and technological knowledge in the field of chemistry for industrial, agricultural, research, medical, pharmaceutical, and other peaceful purposes, not just for its institutions and both public and private actors, but also for third parties, including States Parties to this Convention.

We strongly call for the end of this policy and the implementation of the measures necessary to reverse it in line with the obligations that are part of national implementation of the Convention.

Regarding the facilitation of organisational governance, we believe it is very important to maintain a constructive spirit, as well as the approach and proposals presented by the co-facilitators on improving the OPCW's staff tenure policy. We reiterate that the process of hiring staff to the Technical Secretariat should ensure balanced geographical distribution in line with paragraph 44 of Article VIII, and the necessary measures should be adopted to achieve gender parity across all professional levels.

The Cuban delegation will continue to support the progressive activation of negotiations within all facilitations in order to respond to the Organisation's work priorities in a spirit of cooperation and in line with the resolve expressed by the States Parties in this area.

We welcome the consistent progress made with the OPCW's Centre for Chemistry and Technology and urge the regulatory bodies of the Organisation to consider and adopt a set of working modalities, and a mandate for it, in the immediate future.

I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Ninety-Seventh Session of the Executive Council of the OPCW and published on the OPCW website and extranet.

Thank you.

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