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PERU

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MARISOL AGÜERO COLUNGA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF PERU TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson, Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki,

On my own behalf and on behalf of the delegation of Peru, I would like to express our most cordial congratulations on your election as Chairperson of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, as well as our full support for the success of your management. We are confident that your leadership and demonstrated diplomatic skills will be fundamental in guiding our work.

We thank the Director-General for the comprehensive report presented at this session, while reaffirming our commitment to achieving the objectives set out in the Chemical Weapons Convention and, to that end, of our Organisation.

Likewise, we reiterate our appreciation for the efforts made by the Director-General, the Technical Secretariat, and the Bureau in order to convene this session of the Executive Council in light of all of the health measures necessary to safeguard the health of the delegates and officials of the OPCW, as well as at previous sessions.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the members of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, with the exception of paragraph 15 concerning Syria's cooperation with the OPCW.

With regard to the work of the Technical Secretariat in the Syrian Arab Republic, Peru once again expresses its strong support for the work of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). We have received and are profoundly concerned by the second report of the IIT regarding the incident that took place on 4 February 2018 in Saraqib, for which the conclusions state that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Syrian Arab Air Force used chlorine gas as a chemical weapon. This second report has produced a similar conclusion regarding the responsibility of the Syrian Government for the use of chemical weapons in clear contradiction of the principles of our foundational treaty.

Concerning the most recent report by the DAT, we note that there still remain inconsistencies and gaps in the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic. Peru will continue to reiterate as much as possible its call for the Syrian Arab Republic to demonstrate effective cooperation with the OPCW, which should translate into concrete results in the short term for its initial



declaration and the work of the Investigation and Identification Team. For this reason, it is critical to get back on track with dialogue and the implementation of the mandate of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

My delegation welcomes the decision taken by consensus at Part II of the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties on the appointment of the Organisation's External Auditor, whereby a working group is to be established to assess the best approach to designating an adequate set of appointment procedures for the future. Peru supports the nomination of the distinguished Ambassador of Guatemala as Chairperson of said working group in representation of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, and hopes to be able to contribute to the work that will be undertaken in this area.

My delegation expresses its recognition of the facilitators of the working group on organisational governance, the distinguished Ambassador Laura Dupuy of Uruguay and Ambassador Matthew Neuhaus of Australia, for the work that they continue to do. Nevertheless, we have observed with some concern that the report of the Director-General on Secretariat personnel indicates that the percentage of the representation of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean has decreased to 5.8%. This demonstrates that while the situation is clear in terms of the imbalance in geographical distribution across the staff of the Technical Secretariat, which has continued to be discussed since the preparations for the Fourth Review Conference, the situation has not improved at all; to the contrary, the gaps have widened.

In this regard, it is key to note that paragraph 44 of Article VIII of the Chemical Weapons Convention stipulates that “[d]ue regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible”. We believe that this mandate of the Convention should be reflected in a Technical Secretariat that includes more professionals from Latin American countries, who certainly have much to contribute to the Organisation. This should be done with concrete measures that will make it possible to narrow the existing gaps such as, for example, flexibility in the requirements for obtaining a work position and adaptation to the realities of each regional group. Finally, we reiterate that possible flexibility in the human resources policy should be aimed at posts of high specialisation, similar to those held by inspectors and that they should be exceptional in nature, bearing in mind that the OCPW is not a career organisation.

I kindly request, Mr Chairperson, that this statement be considered an official document of this session of the Council.

Thank you.

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