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MEXICO

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JOSÉ ANTONIO ZABALGOITIA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES TO THE
OPCW AT THE NINETY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Distinguished Representatives,
Delegates,

The delegation of Mexico extends a warm welcome to H.E. Abdelouahab Bellouki, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco, as the Chairperson of the Executive Council. We express to him our full support and cooperation to ensure that this session of the Council moves forward successfully.

We reiterate to H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias, Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and all staff of the Technical Secretariat, our recognition of their responsiveness and professionalism since, in spite of these difficult times, they have demonstrated the flexibility and integrity to continue carrying out their duties to achieve the objectives of the Convention, as well as the mandates of the Executive Council and the Conference of the States Parties.

We also thank the Director-General for his broad report on the progress in implementing the Convention, particularly with regard to industry inspections and the investigation into the use and verification of the destruction of chemical weapons.

As States Parties, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that during the Fifth Review Conference, which is scheduled to take place in 2023, we will be able to report with satisfaction to the international community that all the chemical weapons declared in 1997 have been eliminated.

The Government of Mexico expresses its conviction that multilateral mechanisms guarantee international peace and security. We likewise voice our hope to be able to achieve universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention and we call upon those States that are not yet members of the OPCW to accede to the Convention.

Mexico's pacifist foreign policy, which is based upon international law, neither allows for nor justifies the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, or under any circumstances, and joins the universal demand that both public and private bodies that use them be held responsible under international law.



Mexico is in favour of the participation of all those interested or affected as a way to reach common ground, and the possibility of establishing strong, long-lasting agreements that use international law as a framework.

With regard to the programme to eliminate chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, Mexico is very conscious of the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has impeded the last two rounds scheduled by the Technical Secretariat; we hope that the Syrian authorities will approve new dates to make progress towards a solution for the outstanding issues that still remain in relation to its initial declaration.

Mexico invites Syria to broaden the dialogue, both with the various bodies of the OPCW Technical Secretariat, as well as with other bodies within the United Nations, with the purpose of identifying solutions to the complex situation in which the Syrian population is living today.

The Government of Mexico would welcome greater collaboration from Syria in the investigations of the Fact-Finding Mission and, above all, with the Investigation and Identification Team, the work of which is fundamental in identifying the origin of the chemical weapons used in the incidents that have taken place on Syrian territory and, in this case, to demand the accountability of the perpetrators.

The Government of Mexico avails itself of this opportunity to note that the international community should not wait for another global phenomenon such as the COVID-19 pandemic to reflect upon and be conscious of the fact that full international cooperation without any preconditions is necessary in order to confront the negative effects of globalisation.

In this regard, Mexico trusts that the Centre for Chemistry and Technology will be the keystone that facilitates and serves as a catalyst to broaden and improve the capacities of all the Organisation's Member States, and that it will be a driving factor behind the technical, scientific, and academic development of countries, in addition to opening the door to the peaceful development of chemistry for the good of mankind. In other words, a true expression of international cooperation.

On another matter, as Permanent Representative of Mexico to the OPCW and in my national capacity, I echo the statements delivered by the coordinator of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States regarding the inadmissible sub-representation of GRULAC States among hired staff.

While the OPCW Technical Secretariat argues that there are objectives that require effective actions to be carried out by highly qualified personnel, this should not be the motive for deviating from a balance among regional groups to fill vacancies to the detriment of what is stipulated in paragraph 44 of Article VIII of the Convention itself. Mexico urges the Technical Secretariat to increase the hiring of Latin American staff members—without hindering the flexibility granted to the Director-General in the hiring of personnel, and without weakening the objectives of the Convention—to attain an effective representation of our region and to continue with the gender parity policy.

The delegation of Mexico expresses its appreciation to all States Parties for having supported, at the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, the idea of establishing a working group to develop a mechanism for the appointment of the External Auditor. Our appreciation is extended to Ambassador Bellouki for his support for this initiative.

The Chemical Weapons Convention has been a success thanks to the plurality of interests and perspectives that have come together for a common purpose: the elimination of all chemical weapons, including stockpiles and production facilities, under a verification and inspection regime that facilitates permanent eradication.

As the Convention is an accepted norm and recognised by the international community, and the observance thereof is the obligation of all States Parties, Mexico strongly calls for our achievement of the objectives of this norm and insists upon strict compliance therewith.

We kindly request that this statement be considered a public and official document of this session and published on the OPCW's official website.

Thank you.

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