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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 TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES ON ADDRESSING THE THREAT OF THE USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS UNDER AGENDA ITEM 9(D)**

Mr Chairperson,  
Mr Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,

Allow me to, on behalf of the Cuban delegation, begin to congratulate H.E. José Antonio Zabalgoitia, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mexico to the OPCW, on his election as Chairperson of the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. We wish him success in overseeing our work.

Cuba, one of the original signatories and States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, firmly rejects the use of chemical weapons and any type of weapon of mass destruction by anyone and under any circumstance. It also underscores that the use of chemical weapons is completely contrary to the norms of international and humanitarian law, as well as the legal standards of the international community. All use of these inhumane weapons must be duly investigated.

Upholding the authority and effectiveness of the Convention, the implementation of its object and purpose, and undertaking to put the work of the OPCW back on the right track are responsibilities shared by all the States Parties and should serve as the common interest of all.

The technical nature of the OPCW must be preserved. The Convention contains provisions on a complete, strict, and specific verification regime and procedures established by consensus, as well as measures to ensure the implementation of the Convention, which has not assigned to the Technical Secretariat any authority to attribute responsibility for the alleged use of chemical weapons. The States Parties and the Technical Secretariat must act strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and its pertinent annex, and work earnestly to safeguard its authority and effectiveness. The proposals and initiatives that are being presented at the OPCW and that do not meet the aforementioned criteria are not acceptable to Cuba.

On repeated occasions, the Cuban delegation has emphasised that the politicisation of outstanding technical issues concerning the destruction of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic and the alleged use of chemical agents in said country have hindered the search for permanent solutions that are acceptable to all.



All States Parties have borne witness to the accelerated process and unprecedented efforts via which the Syrian Arab Republic has adhered to the Chemical Weapons Convention in spite of the complex domestic situation in the country and the war that was unleashed and imposed against this country nearly one decade ago.

The delegation of Cuba reiterates that all the alleged incidents or those related to the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic must be investigated professionally and impartially, using the adequate experience of the OPCW and the current procedures adopted by a consensus of the States Parties. We reiterate that any interaction with this State Party must be carried out just like with any other, without external interference, with full respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and with the consent of its legitimate authorities.

The Cuban delegation is pleased to welcome the substantive efforts made and the progress achieved in the existing cooperation between the Technical Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic. In this regard, it awaits with interest the continuation of effective, successful cooperation between the OPCW and this State Party.

The Cuban delegation once more urges the United States—the only State in possession of chemical weapons—to fulfil its obligation to finish their destruction in an expedited and secure manner, in accordance with the relevant decision of the Conference of the States Parties, the provisions set out in the Convention, its Verification Annex, and the relevant decisions that have been adopted as the principle guarantee for the elimination of any future possibility of the use of chemical weapons in the world.

Addressing the threat of the use of chemical weapons also implies addressing international cooperation, which must be effectively strengthened in order to improve the peaceful use of chemistry. The full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of all the provisions of the Convention is an absolute priority and must be considered with this aspect in mind without further ado in order to improve the capacities of all States Parties, and especially those that are still developing, in order to implement the Convention and promote their economic and technological development, while eliminating obstacles such as the illegitimate imposition of coercive, unilateral measures in the field of the peaceful use of chemistry. In this regard, discussions should also focus on establishing a mechanism of the Technical Secretariat to track and ensure the implementation of Article XI as part of meeting all of the obligations undertaken by States Parties, in keeping with the provisions of the Convention.

Finally, the Cuban delegation expresses its solidarity with the people and Government of Syria for the loss of lives and material damages resulting from the appalling, illegitimate war launched against this country for nearly a decade.

I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this Conference and published on the OPCW's external server and website.

Thank you.

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