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MEXICO

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JOSÉ ANTONIO ZABALGOITIA TREJO
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES
TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Distinguished Representatives,
Delegates,

The delegation of Mexico is grateful for the support and confidence granted during its chairmanship of the Twenty-Fifth Conference of the States Parties to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, especially in the face of all the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, without neglecting to address the priorities of the implementation of the Convention. Not an easy task, but we succeeded thanks to the timely assistance of the Technical Secretariat, its Director-General, and the States Parties. Today we can confirm that in spite of everything, the OPCW has demonstrated its resilience, and we continue to move towards our desired common goal: “a world free of chemical weapons”.

In particular, the Government of Mexico expresses its confidence in H.E. Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen of Norway who, on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, will preside over the Twenty-Sixth Conference of the States Parties. Ambassador Svendsen, we reiterate our full support for the work of this Conference.

We thank the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, for his opening statement and the comprehensive report on the activities carried out by the staff of the Technical Secretariat in 2021. Mexico offers Ambassador Arias its broadest support for the renewal of his mandate and recognises his leadership of the OPCW over the last four years.

Once again, complex global problems show us that the best way to face and overcome them is through the joint action of the members of the international community, and that drawing upon multilateralism strengthens diplomacy and improves the international community’s methods of action.

My delegation calls on all States Parties and operational bodies of the OPCW to continue to demonstrate their strong resolve to implement the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention in a transparent and effective manner.



Mexico is deeply concerned that there are still four States not Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, especially given the imminent total destruction of declared chemical arsenals. Given that our mission is to eliminate all traces of these weapons, eradicate the threat of their possible use, and live in a world free of the possibility that they will be used again, it is urgent to convince the governments of these countries of the virtues of the Convention.

Mexico, like all the States Parties that have ratified the Convention, strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons by any actor, in any place, and under any circumstances. The use of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is a serious violation of international law, international humanitarian law, and human rights.

We can build peaceful societies by eliminating weapons of mass destruction and promoting the control of conventional weapons. Today, terrorist groups, mercenaries, and organised crime illegally acquire in the secondary and black markets not only conventional arsenals, but also toxic chemicals, biochemicals, and technical assistance to become more effective in their violent actions.

Within this context of a lack of security due to the risks of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Mexico is also concerned about the illegal and uncontrolled proliferation of conventional weapons, often due to negligence or complicity of companies that profit from their illegal trade.

Mexico has taken note that the only possessor State is making sustained progress in its destruction programme for declared chemical weapons, and that the authorities of that State have affirmed that this process will be concluded without delay on the agreed date. It also recognises Japan's efforts to continue locating and destroying the weapons abandoned in China.

With regard to the elimination of chemical weapons in Syria, Mexico expresses its concern and urges Syria to cooperate fully with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW, as well as with its Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the Investigation and Identification Team, and the Fact-Finding Mission, in order to finally resolve the outstanding issues and inconsistencies in its initial statement.

In a spirit of commitment and in compliance with the obligations set out in the Chemical Weapons Convention, Mexico urges Syria to expeditiously issue visas for all members of the DAT and to facilitate the work of the experts in order to prevent any impact on the work of the Organisation, and to cooperate with the OPCW to identify and promptly bring to justice those responsible for using chemical weapons on its territory.

Regarding the case of the poisoning of Mr Navalny, we trust in the ability and good faith of the States involved to openly and diplomatically bridge the gap between their positions so that, with the support of the Organisation, dialogue will clarify all the aspects related to this incident.

The Government of Mexico recognises that the objectives and purposes of the Convention can only be viable if the OPCW has adequate financial support for its Programme and Budget. But at the same time, it appreciates the adjustments to the initial draft budget decision for the 2022 – 2023 biennium.

Mexico believes that the revisions should be larger in scale based on the negative impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the economies of most countries; even before the pandemic, several States Parties were already facing difficulties covering the payment of their previous instalments, which will be aggravated by the 2% increase in regular contributions.

Additionally, Mexico supports the non-transfer of surplus resources from the international cooperation category to other administrative chapters, as well as the establishment of a fund to cover future needs. In that regard, we appreciate the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland's voluntary contribution of GBP 150,000 (one hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling) to the OPCW with the goal of improving capacities of laboratories in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC), to help them achieve the status of designated laboratories. We trust that the Centre for Chemistry and Technology will be an effective vehicle for improving international cooperation and assistance programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia.

Ahead of the Fifth Review Conference, Mexico invites the States Parties to redouble their efforts to overcome the issues that have kept the OPCW on the edge of politicisation and polarisation. The greatest challenge we face is being able to use multilateral diplomacy to promote agreements, amendments, adjustments to the provisions of the Convention, and map out the transformation that the Organisation needs.

We need to broaden our discussions, seek consensus, technically and scientifically substantiate our proposals, analyse all relevant aspects of controversial issues and, although voting is a way to address bottlenecks and unblock processes, we seek solutions based on common ground—not on our differences.

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

Thank you.

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