



OPCW

Executive Council

Ninety-Ninth Session
8 – 10 March 2022

EC-99/NAT.55
8 March 2022
ENGLISH and SPANISH only

MEXICO

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

Madam Chairperson,
Distinguished Representatives,
Delegates,

The Mexican delegation recognises the effective work of Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki in leading the work of the Executive Council and hopes that his new responsibilities will be as successful as his performance at the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). At the same time, I take this opportunity to express our support for Ambassador Eniola Olaitan Ajayi of Nigeria, who today assumes the role of Chairperson at a challenging time. With her professionalism and sensitivity, she will know how to successfully lead our work at this session.

Mexico wishes to recognise the performance of Ambassador Fernando Arias as he carries out the mandate of Director-General of the OPCW; that recognition extends to the personnel of the Technical Secretariat for its efforts to achieve the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Thank you for your timely and detailed report, Mr Director-General.

After more than two years facing the COVID-19 pandemic, it is fitting to acknowledge that it has been possible to attend to our priorities, build the capacities of the States Parties, and progress in the construction of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology. Mexico is certain that the Centre's inauguration in April 2023 will mark the beginning of a new stage in the life of the OPCW characterised by a greater emphasis on the peaceful uses of chemistry, and by stronger international cooperation within the Organisation.

We are pleased that Latin America and the Caribbean now have a laboratory certified by the OPCW. We thank all the States Parties and the Secretariat for assisting Brazil in achieving this important development.

This pandemic has forced us to strengthen the OPCW's professional and technical structure, as well as its information technology capacities. For this reason, we support Germany's proposal, which would make it possible to ensure the continuity of the Executive Council's activities in the event of an emergency.

The pandemic has also affected and delayed the progress of the United States in the destruction of its arsenal of chemical weapons, as well as those that were abandoned by Japan in China.



The Government of Mexico trusts that the authorities of these countries will be able to completely eliminate these chemical weapons by the established deadlines.

At the relevant fora within the United Nations, Mexico has noted that the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation constitutes a flagrant violation of Article 2, paragraph 4 of the Charter of the United Nations and further constitutes aggression as defined in resolution 3314 (XXIX) of the General Assembly.

We reject the development, possession, and use of all weapons of mass destruction, be they nuclear, chemical, biological, or radiological, as well as conventional weapons that also affect peace and stability in nations.

Mexico reiterates its absolute condemnation of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstances. Any act that could transgress the obligations that we have undertaken as States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention constitutes a serious act contrary to international law.

With regard to the dossier on the elimination of chemical weapons in Syria, Mexico—while conscious of the situation that has been prevailing in the Syrian Arab Republic for years—calls upon the authorities of this country to meet their international obligations in line with the Chemical Weapons Convention, resolve the outstanding issues with its initial declaration, and work with the investigations being carried out by the Fact-Finding Mission and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT).

Mexico recognises the cooperation of the Syrian authorities with the investigations of the Fact-Finding Mission into the incidents that took place in Marea in 2015 and Kafr Zeita in 2016. Similar conduct would be welcomed with regard to: the issuance of visas to all members of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT); the resolution of outstanding issues and inconsistencies in its initial declaration; the agreement of dates for the twenty-fifth round of consultations with the OPCW; a meeting between the Director-General and the Syrian Minister; the authorisation of visits to facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre in Barzah and Jamrayah; and the entry of members of the IIT to identify and hold accountable those responsible for the use of chemical weapons on its territory. My Government hopes that Syria will comply with the mandate of the Convention and soon return to enjoying its rights and privileges within the OPCW.

With regard to the case of Mr Navalny, Mexico reiterates that the best way to make progress in resolving differences is through dialogue and cooperation, which is why we urge the States Parties involved in the investigation into the incident to agree upon a mechanism that will put into place the conditions that would allow for dialogue and the exchange of information in order to—with the support of the Organisation—clarify the facts and hold those responsible to account.

Over the next year, three events will be defining moments for the future of our Organisation: the twenty-sixth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention and the establishment of the OPCW; the finalisation of the destruction of the chemical weapons declared by the United States; and the inauguration of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology.

These events will frame the work of the Fifth Review Conference. Mexico urges the States Parties to commit to the future of the Organisation and demonstrate that multilateralism is the most important way to build agreements and orient our Organisation towards a future free of

chemical weapons. Mexico is convinced that the Review Conference will be an opportunity to urge the four countries that are not yet Party to the Convention to join and thus achieve universality.

We always remember that: our commitment was to destroy all existing chemical weapons; we have made remarkable progress towards our objective; we cannot allow their proliferation; we are responsible for controlling every type of hazardous or toxic chemical; the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the past must be held accountable; chemistry is our partner in spurring economic development within our nations, and its use must be exclusively for peaceful purposes; and we will achieve this through broad international cooperation as the tool for maintaining peaceful conditions among nations.

We have made a great deal of progress towards these goals, but it is still critical to maintain our united, coordinated efforts. This is not the time to slow our pace.

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

Thank you.

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