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PERU

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

Mr Chairperson, Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki,

I would like to begin my statement by recognising the excellent work that has been under way over the course of your term as Chairperson of the OPCW Executive Council. I would express the gratitude of my delegation for all the efforts made, and reiterate our firm resolve to continue collaborating with you towards the success of the work of this important decision-making body.

Likewise, my delegation values the clear and complete report presented by the Director-General at this session, and we reaffirm our full commitment to the implementation of the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention and, ultimately, to the work of this Organisation.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, with the exception of paragraph 15 thereof, which refers to Syria's cooperation with the OPCW.

Peru reiterates its firm support for the work carried out by the Technical Secretariat in the Syrian Arab Republic, especially that of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT).

With regard to the latest DAT report, we note with concern that the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic continues to have gaps and inconsistencies. For as long as it is necessary, Peru will continue to reiterate its call to the Syrian Arab Republic to demonstrate effective cooperation with the OPCW that translates into concrete results in the short term, and to clarify the matters contained in its declaration in order to provide the information required by the Conference of the States Parties regarding the incidents in the cities of Ltamenah and Saraqib.

In this session, the Council is tasked with adopting a decision on the biennial Budget for our Organisation for the years 2022 – 2023. My delegation appreciates the efforts of the Technical Secretariat towards restoring, in a progressive manner, the resources of the programme for activities in international cooperation and wholeheartedly supports this increase. Nevertheless, it is crucial that resources allocated to this programme are effectively and efficiently used in full. For this reason, Peru supports the proposal of the Africa Group to consider the possibility of creating a special fund for international cooperation programmes within the Organisation's budget to ensure the complete utilisation of allocated resources.



At the same time, my delegation expresses its recognition of the Permanent Representation of Germany for its leadership in the efforts aimed at developing a draft decision that would make it possible to hold virtual meetings or sessions of the Executive Council in exceptional circumstances, such as the case of the pandemic, which we are still facing. I am pleased to express Peru's support for this proposal and its hope that it is adopted by consensus.

Likewise, we recognise the efforts made by the co-facilitators of the working group on organisational governance, Ambassadors Matthew Neuhaus of Australia, and Laura Dupuy of Uruguay. Peru has been an active participant in the consultations held on the draft decision on amendments to the OPCW recruitment policy and has expressed its position regarding the importance of working in parallel on the adoption of concrete measures to effectively implement the principle of geographic distribution across the staff of the Technical Secretariat, as established in paragraph 44 of Article VIII of the Chemical Weapons Convention, in order to overcome the current imbalance. It is Peru's position that both of these matters are intrinsically linked and, for this reason, should be addressed in parallel. My delegation will continue to provide substantive support within this space in order to achieve a consensus-supported proposal that takes into account the concerns of all regional groups.

The National Authorities are key players in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and, for this reason, it is essential to closely listen to their concerns and requests. Virtual training courses are crucial for our National Authorities to be able to continue training in various areas, as the Convention periodically requires of States Parties. For this reason, we request that the Technical Secretariat boost its efforts to ensure that these training courses can be held—including in Spanish for GRULAC States, or with simultaneous interpretation to and from that language when training courses are delivered in English. We also request improved coordination of the programme schedules that are offered, bearing in mind that scheduling activities at daybreak is not conducive to higher levels of participation.

My delegation welcomes and offers congratulations on the laying of the first stone for the construction of the OPCW's Centre for Chemistry and Technology, which took place on 23 September this year. We firmly believe that this great project will be extremely useful for all States Parties to the Convention and, above all, mark an important milestone for scientific investigation in the field of chemistry. Peru is pleased to be one of the more than forty countries that have contributed to the fund for the construction of the new OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology and trusts that the Centre will serve to continue achieving the objectives of the Convention, especially with regard to assistance and protection and international cooperation.

Peru wishes to express its strong support for the renewal of Ambassador Fernando Arias's appointment as Director-General of the OPCW for a second four-year term. I reiterate my delegation's complete willingness to work together with the Technical Secretariat to ensure that the OPCW continues to be the most successful organisation within the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

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

Thank you.