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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-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,  
Distinguished representatives,  
Delegates,

The delegation of Mexico wishes to express its broad support for the work carried out by the Ambassador of El Salvador, Agustín Vásquez Gómez, as Chairperson of the Executive Council. Just like at previous sessions, we trust in his extensive experience to successfully lead this session.

We reiterate our same trust and support in Ambassador Fernando Arias, Director-General of the OPCW, who—in spite of the difficulties associated with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic—has maintained the pace of the activities of the Technical Secretariat and fulfilment of the mandates of the Executive Council and the Conference of the States Parties, in line with the provisions set out in the Convention.

Recalling that, thanks to the joint efforts of the OPCW Member States, 90% of declared chemical weapons have been destroyed, I avail myself of this opportunity to recognise the efforts of all of us taking part to achieve the noble goal of a world free of chemical weapons. Likewise, we should congratulate ourselves because, in spite of the state of emergency that we are facing, our commitment to eliminating chemical weapons is as strong as ever, and closely tied to the highest level of international cooperation to boost the economic development of all States Parties to the Convention.

The Government of Mexico strongly believes that multilateralism, as well as close and unconditional international cooperation, are ideal tools for overcoming the challenges of globalisation and taking advantage of the opportunities derived from it. International peace and security should be sustained within the modern mindset (to paraphrase the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali) in the globalised village; our shared responsibility is to build a world full of expectations, rather than one without hope.

Mexico's foreign policy, true to its diplomatic tradition, strongly encourages the total elimination of any type of weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, and at this and all forums on this matter, Mexico reiterates its condemnation of "the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstances".



The delegation of Mexico is aware that the global development of the pandemic originating from SARS-CoV-2 and its evolution affect the implementation of the activities of the Technical Secretariat, as well as the process of the destruction of the stockpiles in the United States, and the search for and elimination of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on Chinese territory. That notwithstanding, we do hope that these States Parties, together with the Secretariat, will be able to continue the destruction process.

With regard to the use of chemical weapons in Syria, the Government of Mexico has been closely following the investigations led by the Declaration Assessment Team, the Fact-Finding Mission, and the Investigation and Identification Team, as well as the activities of the Technical Secretariat, and the monthly reports by the Director-General and the National Authority of Syria, including the allegations concerning the actions of terrorist groups.

Mexico is pleased to note that the Syrian Government has demonstrated signs of cooperation with the OPCW, but we are concerned by the slow progress in clarifying the outstanding issues in the initial declaration. We have also noted that the cooperation of the Syrian authorities is limited and does not include support for the Investigation and Identification Team or the implementation of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3. My delegation would hope that, as circumstances permit, the Syrian Government will expand its support to all bodies of the OPCW in compliance with the Convention.

With regard to the international community's existing concerns about the use of nerve agents in individual cases, the delegation of Mexico calls upon all Member States to work towards the effective implementation of the Convention and to prevent it from becoming empty words. In terms of the investigation into the incident in the case of Mr Navalny, Mexico urges all parties to make every effort and to cooperate with the OPCW until the facts are made clear, in strict compliance with the Convention.

Mexico hopes that the Centre for Chemistry and Technology will become a reality in the year 2023 and that, as a platform for technical, scientific, and academic development and a means of expanding and improving the capacities of all the Organisation's Member States, it will become a benchmark of excellence within the structure of the regional cooperation programme for the advancement of the National Authorities of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Finally, Mexico underscores the importance of the reports of the Scientific Advisory Board on the toxic gases that can affect the central nervous system and shares the need for the Director-General to be continually informed of scientific and technological progress related to these types of chemicals, while ensuring that the States Parties, the Advisory Board, and the Conference are kept informed.

I 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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