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NORTHERN IRELAND AND DELIVERED BY THE DELEGATION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF COSTA RICA TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-SEVENTH
SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 24**

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Excellencies,
Colleagues,

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of 70 States Parties namely, Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and Uruguay.

The integration of a gender equality perspective in the work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) is of utmost importance and must continue to be strengthened. A wide diversity of views is essential for decision making and in helping us tackle the challenges we face with greater effectiveness.

We would like to commend the Director-General and staff of the Secretariat for the work they have carried out thus far to advance the issue of gender equality in the Organisation and we welcome the significant work that has been done in recent years, including the gender and diversity audit and achieving gender parity at the senior management level. It is clear from the actions of the Secretariat and the position articulated by many States Parties that this is viewed as an important area, and we can already see that there is a strong foundation in place which can be built upon. We would encourage the Secretariat to continue this work and to develop a practice of mutual learning with States Parties.

The importance and need for action in this area has been clearly highlighted through research from Organisations, such as the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), which have shown that women continue to be underrepresented both within the OPCW and the



work of the Convention. At recent meetings of the Conference of the States Parties, women, on average, comprise just one third of the total representatives in attendance; and while the Secretariat has achieved gender parity at the senior management level, more action is needed at other levels and in the activities of the Organisation.

Mr Chairperson, this issue is much broader than hiring practices and the composition of delegations. It is a cross-cutting issue with direct relevance to the implementation of each aspect of the Convention, including in the provision of care and assistance to women affected by chemical weapons. Therefore, it is crucial that in all aspects of the Secretariat's work, including cooperation and assistance activities, training for inspectors and field missions, a gender perspective is applied, to ensure these differences are dealt with in an appropriate manner. We commend efforts made towards a more holistic and systematic approach, including potentially developing a dedicated strategy.

There is no doubt that civil society also has played a pivotal role in raising awareness on gender equality in the implementation of the Convention. Civil society provides advice and ideas that spur us on to meaningful action. Civil society can also play an important role in engaging and communicating with the wider public and can often support efforts to assist victims on the ground after a chemical attack. We are thankful for civil society's commitment to advancing peace and security within the disarmament field and look forward to continued collaboration.

In conclusion, we urge all States Parties to support efforts to incorporate a gender equality perspective within the work of the Convention, including at the Fifth Review Conference next year. Such support can only improve the functioning of the Convention and the Organisation, lead to better outcomes, and strengthen international peace and security.

Thank you.

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