



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-Seventh Session
28 November – 1 December 2022

C-27/NAT.57
29 November 2022
ENGLISH and SPANISH only

VENEZUELA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CALIXTO ANTONIO ORTEGA RÍOS
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF
VENEZUELA TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY SEVENTH SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) welcomes all the delegations participating in this session of the Conference of the States Parties, which recently commenced.

This is a prime opportunity to congratulate and welcome H.E. Vusimuzi Madonsela, Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa, as Chairperson of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties; we express our confidence that his leadership will bring this Conference to a satisfactory conclusion.

We also extend our congratulations to the new Vice-Chairpersons and the other members of the Bureau, and we wish them every success in overseeing the work of this Session. At the same time, we reiterate to them our commitment to work in a dedicated manner towards the common objectives of the Organisation.

Similarly, we welcome and recognise the work of H.E. Bård Ivar Svendsen, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway, and Chairperson of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, and we thank him for his reports. We also extend our greetings to the Director-General, H.E. Fernando Arias, and thank him for his extensive report on the general overview of the state of implementation of Article VII of the Chemical Weapons Convention and his addition of initial measures. Our delegation reiterates its gratitude to the personnel of the OPCW for their dedication to the implementation of the noble objectives of the Organisation.

We believe it is important and prudent to continue implementing certain basic health and safety measures, but we also acknowledge the importance of the active participation of all the States Parties in the work of the OPCW, without discrimination or technical obstacles, under modalities that should be considered exceptional. We call for the Organisation to resume its normal operations, as much as is possible, with special attention given to the sessions of the policy-making organs.



The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and China. We recognise that the existence of weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international peace and security; as such, we reaffirm our commitment to global and absolute chemical disarmament in implementing the international obligations derived from the international legal instruments on the matter. Likewise, we express our strongest possible and unwavering condemnation of the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemical products as a weapon anywhere, by anyone, and under any circumstances.

Venezuela also reiterates its commitment to the OPCW and reaffirms the need to defend the principles set out in the Convention towards safeguarding the technical essence of the Organisation, which will make it possible to preserve this multilateral space with a relevant technical mandate in the field of disarmament and the non-proliferation of chemical weapons on the planet.

The work of the OPCW towards the destruction of most of the world's combined stockpiles of chemical weapons had the active participation of all States Parties, yet current challenges require that we overcome politicisation regarding the use of chemical weapons, which considerably limits the continuation of the Organisation's work in such a way that our very best efforts are needed to strengthen the culture of consensus, cooperation, and true multilateralism.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela believes that international cooperation, true multilateralism, and assistance are incompatible with the imposition of coercive unilateral measures, which are contrary to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and are a blatant violation of international law, as well as of the Convention. As a result, we reiterate at this Conference our condemnation of the coercive, unilateral measures that are currently imposed against the Venezuelan people by various States Parties, as they impede our institutional work with the OPCW, among other things that are of great importance to our people.

Along these lines, our delegation is concerned that the only possessor State Party will not meet the deadline set for the destruction of its chemical stockpile; for this reason, we urge the United States of America, in its position of the sole possessor State, to faithfully comply with the provisions of the Convention, which have been developed by the regulatory bodies of the OPCW, in full accordance with the existing international obligations that govern the work of the Organisation in such an important task.

Regarding the elimination and destruction of Syria's chemical weapons, we welcome the reports by the Director-General, which acknowledge the effective destruction of declared weapons and facilities as a result of collaborative work with the OPCW; this makes it possible to recognise the achievements of the Syrian Arab Republic in very difficult security conditions, facing a multifactorial plan of aggression—both internal and external. In this way, we hope for continued, successful collaboration between both parties in the full spectrum of issues that can be addressed, without any external interference and with full respect for Syria's territorial and political sovereignty.

As a State Party to the Convention dedicated to the eradication of chemical weapons, Venezuela reiterates its concern surrounding the recurrent use of alleged information taken from non-scientific sources with the aim of making accusations against some States Parties. This practice points to the

abandonment of the international commitments stemming from the Convention and the regulatory development of the Organisation which, it stands to mention, provides a set of tools that make it possible to scientifically determine the alleged use of chemical weapons.

In this regard, we call for the preparation and convening of the Fifth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in May 2023 to strengthen the work of the OPCW and the commitment of the States Parties with the aim of implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations system, and all to the benefit of guaranteeing a world free of chemical weapons, with close international cooperation and assistance among Member States.

This Conference is a prime space for continuing and expanding the work of the OPCW in favour of the implementation of the Convention, especially of the articles related to the development of the States Parties and international cooperation and assistance through increased allocation of resources and support that will facilitate the transfer of technology, materials, and equipment, as well as for preparing and strengthening the national capacities of the States Parties, particularly those with less developed economies, thus responding to the challenges posed by today's global socioeconomic conditions.

Additionally, the Conference will provide the opportunity to review the recruitment of personnel to the Technical Secretariat, which must be fair, transparent, and guarantee balanced geographic distribution, in line with the provisions of paragraph 44, Article VIII of the Convention, and ensure gender parity. Another subject of interest to the Venezuelan delegation is the identification of the supports for and technical work of the OPCW for the continuation of global efforts in the fight against chemical terrorism.

We highly value the recently held workshop on the review and assessment of the decision in favour of implementing Article XI of the Convention, and we hope it will lead to improvements in its implementation, which responds to the needs of the States Parties.

The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela expresses to the Chairperson of the Conference of the States Parties its wishes for the successful conclusion of the Twenty-Seventh Session.

Finally, we request that this statement be considered an official document of this session and published on Catalyst and the Organisation's website.

Thank you.

- - - 0 - - -