



OPCW

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GUATEMALA

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA TO
THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF
THE STATES PARTIES**

Our delegation would like to begin by welcoming the Chairperson of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties, H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela of the Republic of South Africa, who—with his experience and leadership—we are sure will lead us, with eloquence and a clear vision, towards the desired outcome of this Conference.

We also express our gratitude to the outgoing Chairperson, H.E. Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen of Norway, for his leadership during the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference.

Our delegation also wishes to express its gratitude for the work and leadership of the Director-General of the OPCW, His Excellency Ambassador Fernando Arias, which allowed for the continuity of the work of the Organisation and the implementation of the Convention in spite of the numerous challenges encountered this year. We also thank his work team.

This year, we commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry-into-force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. As States Parties, we are fostering an Organisation of disarmament for international peace and security, while at the same time committing to act with the goal of achieving real progress towards general and complete disarmament, including the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons. For this reason, Guatemala once again reiterates that the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstances is unacceptable and constitutes a clear violation of international law, particularly the obligations set out in the Convention. Anyone responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be identified and must be brought to justice through the legitimate, legal, and competent mechanisms established for such.

After many years of effective work, the world is closer than ever to achieving the destruction of all declared stockpiles of chemical weapons. We must take greater efforts to achieve this goal, while also bearing in mind other current challenges, such as preventing the re-emergence of these weapons, as well as preventing the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors, which has been identified as a serious latent risk. This reality requires that we, as States Parties, do not let our guard down or give up our efforts aimed at an effective verification regime and for achieving the goal of the complete universality of the Convention. For this reason, Guatemala calls upon those few States not Party to ratify or accede to the Convention swiftly and without any preconditions. At the same time, we reiterate our congratulations to the Director-General for his vision and for prioritising the Centre for Chemistry and Technology project, which will be nurturing the seeds of the Organisation's future.



As a State Party and facilitators of the universality of the Convention, it is our wish to see all Member States of this Organisation complying with their obligations and enjoying their rights and privileges under the Convention. In this regard, we regret that the Syrian Arab Republic still has yet to resolve outstanding issues with the Technical Secretariat. The resolution of these issues is necessary to fully restore its rights within the Organisation; dialogue, mutual cooperation, and good faith between Syria and the Technical Secretariat is of vital importance for this, to resolve in this way what has been stated multiple times in the decisions adopted by the regulatory bodies of this Organisation.

Guatemala has been closely following the work of the Investigation and Identification Team and reiterates its principled position that the Organisation's every action must be carried out in strict compliance with rules and norms, in a transparent and effective manner, to ensure that results are scientifically irrefutable and that no doubt remains regarding their accuracy and legitimacy. This call is extended to all States Parties and the Technical Secretariat.

This year marked the start of the first biennial budget for the Organisation (2022 – 2023), an achievement that will allow the Secretariat to carry out the activities planned within its mandate in a structured and effective manner. Today, the Conference has before it the Organisation's revised draft budget for 2023—at the mid-point of the biennium—which contains an increase in the Organisation's regular budget due to global inflation and the economic crisis. In this regard, we request that future projections attempt to achieve a balanced approach in the allocation of funds for all programmes, particularly with respect to international cooperation and assistance, which developing countries find beneficial, including through capacity-building activities.

Guatemala has accepted the responsibility of chairing the Working Group on the Manner of Appointment of the External Auditor of the Organisation, and we are very pleased to confirm that our mandate has been fully carried out, within a reasonable timeframe and with the results achieved through consensus, as was previously the norm. Today, the Conference has before it a draft decision entitled "Manner of Appointment of the External Auditor"—the result of the Group's work. We take this opportunity to once again reiterate our gratitude for the efforts made by each member of the Group, the support provided by the Technical Secretariat, the ABAF, and for the trust placed in Guatemala to lead this important step for the Organisation.

On another note, we would like to highlight the leadership demonstrated by the Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference, H.E. Ambassador Lauri Kuusing of Estonia. We express our sincere hope that the preparation and convention of the Fifth Special Session of the Conference will remain free of politicisation and polarisation, while taking advantage of the Review Conference to strengthen the Convention towards meeting its objectives.

In the past two years especially, Guatemala has fully committed to the need for full compliance with the obligatory observance of balanced geographic representation and will remain committed to searching for solutions to rectify the conspicuous existing imbalance within the Technical Secretariat. Our delegation is also watching the issue of gender balance, which in our view is an inherent component of the principle of balanced geographic representation, where the gender balance should mean women and men from all regions, equally. This is why we align ourselves with the joint statement on gender delivered at this session of the Conference and underscore our cross-sectional approach to balanced geographic representation as a fundamental principle.

Finally, Mr Chairperson, my delegation calls for the States involved in developing controversies to, in good faith, search for and identify solutions to these disputes as expeditiously as possible in order to return to working collaboratively and focusing on solutions that will help to improve the work entrusted to us by the Convention and the Organisation's regulatory bodies. We strongly believe that this can be achieved if efforts are made based on mutual respect, recognising the equal sovereignty of the States Parties, and the observance—without distinction or exceptions—of the rules that apply equally to all. Our objective is the same: a world free of chemical weapons.

We request, Mr Chairperson, that this statement be considered an official document of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties of the OPCW and published on the Organisation's external server and the Catalyst platform.

Thank you.

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