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VENEZUELA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CALIXTO ANTONIO ORTEGA RÍOS
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF
VENEZUELA TO THE OPCW AT THE 102ND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE
COUNCIL**

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

The Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) once again welcomes the Chairperson, H.E. Ziad M.D. Al Atiyah, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and wishes him every success in leading this session. We assure him of our willingness to collaborate with his management in a dedicated manner that supports the common objectives of the Organisation.

Likewise, we extend our greetings to the Director-General and the Vice-Chairpersons of the Executive Council, and welcome their reports. The Venezuelan delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Rahman Mustafayev, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the OPCW, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and China.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms its commitment to absolute global chemical disarmament, in line with international treaties on the matter. In this regard, today's realities require overcoming politicisation of the use of chemical weapons, which considerably limits the continuity of the work of the Organisation in such a way that it requires our very best efforts to strengthen the culture of consensus, cooperation, and true multilateralism.

The activities of the OPCW in the year 2023 are marked by three important moments: the inauguration of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology, the convention of the Fifth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the deadline for the destruction of the chemical stockpile of the United States of America, the sole possessor State, demonstrating the work achieved towards complete global chemical disarmament and in favour of international peace and security.

The Fifth Review Conference, scheduled for next May, represents an opportunity to strengthen the work of the OPCW, which requires the commitment of the States Parties to implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention in line with the principles of the United Nations system, towards guaranteeing a world free of chemical weapons by virtue of close international cooperation and assistance among Member States.



With regard to the work of the OPCW, the Fifth Review Conference should work on issues that are crucial for the implementation of the Convention, which—once the destruction of declared stockpiles has been completed—will be worthy of greater efforts aimed at solidifying the provisions set out in Articles X and XI, especially those related to the economic and technological development of the States Parties, international cooperation, and assistance, which require increased resources of all kinds in order to transfer technology, materials, and equipment, which will contribute to strengthening national capacities.

The Venezuelan delegation would underscore 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 and the Convention. In this regard, we reiterate before this Council our condemnation of the impact of the coercive unilateral measures that are currently in place against the Venezuelan people and imposed by various States Parties to the Convention, which impede our institutional work within the OPCW, among other issues that are of great importance to our nation.

It then becomes pertinent to add that said measures have a direct impact on the chemical protection and security programmes of the national industry (a fundamental requirement of the Convention), thus reducing the effectiveness of our programmes and increasing the possibility of suffering a major chemical calamity, following the impact of criminal measures and how they have restricted opportunities for the public and private sectors of the chemical and petrochemical industries to adequately prepare for a chemical accident without acquiring the necessary equipment and technology.

Likewise, we trust that the Fifth Review Conference will make it possible to move forward on issues related to the governance of the Organisation, especially with regard to guaranteeing balanced geographical distribution when hiring personnel to the Technical Secretariat, in accordance with the provisions set out in paragraph 44, Article VIII of the Convention. Furthermore, regarding the preparation of the text for the Conference, we reiterate our concerns about the inclusion of paragraphs referring to issues that were the subject of a vote and that do not reflect the views of all Member States, as this will not make it possible to move forward towards a consensus, which is a fundamental element for the success of the Conference.

We believe that the inauguration of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology next May represents the broadening of the OPCW's international cooperation and assistance, in support of strengthening capacity-building efforts for the States Parties. Likewise, we believe that its modalities, mandate, operational needs, and budgetary allotment should be developed in full consultation with the States Parties for subsequent approval by the OPCW's regulatory bodies.

Regarding the elimination and destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, Venezuela underscores the contents of the reports periodically presented to this Council, which acknowledge the effective destruction of said declared weapons and facilities as the result of collaborative work with the OPCW, making it possible to recognise the achievements of the Syrian Arab Republic in very challenging security circumstances, faced with multifactorial aggression—both internally and externally. Thus, we hope for continued successful collaboration between both parties across the spectrum of outstanding matters, without any external interference and with full respect for Syria's sovereignty (territorial and political), as was evidenced at the visit this past January of representatives of the Declaration Assessment Team to Syrian territory.

The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela expresses to the Chairperson of the Executive Council its wishes for a successful 102nd Session.

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

Thank you.

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