



PANAMA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ELIZABETH WARD NEIMAN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA TO THE
OPCW AT THE FIFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE
STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE CHEMICAL
WEAPONS CONVENTION**

On behalf of the delegation of Panama, I wish to first express my most sincere congratulations to H.E. Ambassador Henk Cor van der Kwast on his election as Chairperson of the Fifth Review Conference of the OPCW. I take this opportunity to express our full readiness to support the development of the agenda in line with Panama's commitment to work towards achieving common ground.

In this same way, I take this opportunity to present my kind regards to the Director-General, the members of the Bureau, and the distinguished delegations of the States Parties present today.

I would like to commend the efforts made by H.E. Mr Fernando Arias, Director-General of the OPCW, in support of the smooth functioning of this Organisation. I compliment his team and the members of the Technical Secretariat, who make it possible for us to be working at this Review Conference today, which will contribute greatly to the future within the Organisation.

The Panamanian delegation would also like to express its gratitude to H.E. Lauri Kuusing, Ambassador of Estonia, for leading the work of the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference.

We highlight the efforts of H.E. Ambassador Kuusing, which were carried out in a transparent manner with the aim of reaching a consensus among the delegations. His approach has been important for the regional groups and the States Parties to express their expectations and preferences for the future of the Organisation within an environment of impartiality.

The Republic of Panama, aware of the need to adapt and prepare for the challenges faced since the founding of the Organisation, is pleased to have been one of the States Parties that provided voluntary contributions to the OPCW laboratory modernisation project to transform it into the Centre for Chemistry and Technology. The inauguration of this Centre has represented a milestone for this Organisation, and we are convinced that science plays a fundamental role in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

This collaboration underscores the commitment and high level of trust that we place in this Organisation, since we also support international cooperation programmes. Through our National Authority, Panama is always eager to provide support with whatever is required to achieve the transfer of knowledge via learning programmes.



We are confident that the Centre for Chemistry and Technology will bring countless benefits, such as staff development, additional improvements to the research carried out by this Organisation, and the promotion of international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention. These include improving capacity building of the States Parties, and enhancing outreach to civil society, including academia, scientists, and industrial organisations, among others.

The Panamanian delegation is aware of the efforts made by the OPCW in gender equality. Similarly, we believe that visualisation is key when it comes to increasing the participation and empowerment of women in this area—these are crucial issues. We therefore ask the Technical Secretariat to take concrete actions in this matter, from the perspective of diversity and general inclusion.

In addition, I take advantage of this opportunity to call on the Organisation and the States Parties so that together, we can attain an equitable balance in geographical representation. This balance is the nature of this Organisation and is extremely important in order to guarantee objective and impartial management within the Organisation. Balanced geographic representation would also enrich ideas and solutions to challenges within the Organisation, across different levels and with diverse issues. Panama acknowledges the efforts made by the Technical Secretariat to address the existing regional imbalance. That said, we call for increased efforts that contribute to compliance with the principle of geographical representation as stated in paragraph 44, Article VIII of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We deeply regret the current situation in Ukraine and call for respect for its sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity in line with international law. We express our solidarity with the Ukrainian people and urge the Organisation to closely monitor this situation to prevent the risk of use of chemicals.

Panama condemns the use of chemical weapons, anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstance as this violates various international norms and standards.

We stress the Republic of Panama's commitment to and trust in the mandate of the Convention, with the aim of building a world free of chemical weapons. In this regard, we reiterate the commitment of all States Parties to comply with the obligations of global chemical disarmament; we hope that the destruction of the remaining stockpiles will be completed by the established deadlines and in accordance with the commitments undertaken within the framework of this Convention.

I kindly request, Mr Chairperson, that this statement be considered an official document and published on the OPCW website and the Catalyst platform.

Thank you.

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