



EMBAJADA DE LA REPÚBLICA DE COSTA RICA
EN EL REINO DE LOS PAÍSES BAJOS

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ARNOLDO BRENES CASTRO, PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF COSTA RICA TO THE OPCW AT THE ONE HUNDRED
AND NINTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

We share the same objective. As part of this Organization—the most successful disarmament organization we currently have—we are all united today in the goal of achieving a world permanently free of chemical weapons, where chemistry is used for peace, progress, and prosperity.

In light of recent developments and the persistence of conflicts around the world, Costa Rica, a disarmed democracy for over 75 years, calls for dialogue, the application of international law, multilateralism, and the diplomatic resolution of conflicts to prevent any actions that may endanger international peace and security. Ultimately, it is we who give legitimacy to the international system and to the mission of this Organization.

We reiterate once again our condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstance. For this reason, we also emphasize the importance of strengthening accountability mechanisms at both the national and international levels. While 2023 marked the destruction of all declared chemical weapons stockpiles, we must not downplay the significance of destroying old and abandoned weapons. Likewise, in order to prevent re-emergence and proliferation, it is imperative that we remain vigilant against the use of chemical weapons by non-state actors, something that unfortunately the Technical Secretariat has already confirmed has occurred.

One of the many reasons that justify the success of this Organization is its robust legal regime and near-universal membership. In this regard, we urge States not yet party to the Chemical Weapons Convention to complete their accession, while also reminding all Member States of their duty to ensure strict compliance through national implementation and unwavering respect for the Convention's provisions and prohibitions.

Another key factor contributing to the success of this Organization is its outstanding work, a result of the professionalism and transparency of its staff and procedures. We commend the ongoing and meticulous assistance provided to Ukraine and the reports produced from the Technical Assistance Visits, which have confirmed on three occasions (most recently in the report S/2415/2025 of 20 June) the use of riot control agents in areas of active conflict. In this context, we also recognize the excellent and independent work of the designated laboratories and the invaluable support they provide to the Organization.

We also highlight the efforts and progress made regarding Syria. We welcome all actions taken thus far, including the reorganization of activities in Syria through the Office for Special Missions. In this process, we are aware of the multiple challenges the Organization and the new authorities have faced since last December. Nevertheless, we trust that through



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cooperation, transparent and active dialogue, and with the concerted support of Member States, joint efforts will be able to continue.

We welcome the Secretariat's effectiveness, promptly responding to and following-up on requests for action recently made by Member States regarding specific situations. Any request made by a State Party must be addressed by the Secretariat with the same promptness. We also encourage continued interaction and full cooperation from the States involved.

Furthermore, we commend the Secretariat's tireless efforts to strengthen the capacity of States Parties to detect and respond to chemical threats. These efforts are reflected in numerous training programs, both virtual and in-person courses, the development of informational tools, technical assistance visits, the provision of advanced detection equipment, workshops, and training sessions. My delegation also acknowledges the invaluable contributions of States Parties to the planning and coordination of many of capacity-building initiatives, such as the U.S. course on Chemical Terrorism for GRULAC, to be held next month in Argentina.

We call on all of us to ensure that access to these opportunities is as inclusive and equitable as possible. In this regard, we are confident that a GRULAC CHEMEX will be achieved in the future, and that the Secretariat will continue seeking ways to implement the Action Plan on Geographical Representation. For Costa Rica, both geographical representation and gender inclusion are essential elements in ensuring the highest levels of efficiency, competence, and integrity in the Organization's work.

My delegation highlights actions aimed at maintaining the Organization's excellence, including the proactive commitment to keeping up with rapid technological and scientific developments. This initiative is exemplified by the establishment of a temporary working group on AI, the launch of the "AI Research Challenge," the conference held in Morocco last year, and the recent workshop in China. These initiatives will enable a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities brought by emerging technologies. We trust that the budget to be approved this year will safeguard excellence through the appropriate and efficient management of resources.

Mr. Chairperson, Mr. Director-General, distinguished delegates, before concluding my remarks, I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Thomas Schieb, on your election as Chair of this Council and to express our full support during your mandate, which we are confident you will carry out in the best possible manner. Likewise, my delegation once again recognizes the excellent leadership and ongoing commitment demonstrated by Ambassador Fernando Arias in his role as Director-General of this Organization, alongside Deputy Director-General Odette Melono.

I thank you for your attention and respectfully request that this statement be considered an official document of the One Hundred and Ninth Session of the Executive Council and that it be published both on the website and on Catalyst.