



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 ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr. Chairperson,

Mr. Director-General,

Distinguished delegates,

Costa Rica wishes to begin by acknowledging the leadership exercised by Ambassador Thomas Schieb during his term as Chairperson of the Council. My delegation reiterates its full support during this session. We also recognize the valuable contributions made by the regional Vice-Chairs during their appointment . We are confident that the representatives to be elected during this session will continue to guide the work of this Council with the same diligence and professionalism.

Costa Rica continues to closely follow the developments regarding the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. In this regard, we welcome the constructive cooperation between the authorities of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Technical Secretariat, which has enabled several visits, interviews, and the collection of evidence over the past year. While it is regrettable that the fifth report of the Investigation and Identification Team concluded that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Syrian Air Force at the time was responsible for the chemical weapons attack in Kafr Zeita on 1 October 2016, we nonetheless acknowledge the willingness demonstrated by the new authorities to facilitate the Secretariat's full and unrestricted access to the country for the first time within the framework of investigations of this nature. In light of the commitment expressed by the current authorities, Costa Rica will continue to follow closely any updates regarding relevant findings that may contribute to resolving outstanding issues.

We are mindful that, in addition to the challenges associated with the current transition process, the recent escalation of tensions and military operations in the Middle East presents further difficulties for the continuation of the Technical Secretariat's activities. Notwithstanding these circumstances and the broader implications of the ongoing conflict for the work of the Organization, Costa Rica underscores the importance of pursuing peaceful solutions aimed at protecting human life and preventing the suffering of civilian populations. In this regard, we urge all parties to pursue de-escalation and to engage in open and constructive dialogue through diplomatic channels.



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In a similar vein, four years after the beginning of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and following repeated confirmations by the Secretariat regarding the presence of riot control agents on the battlefield in recent years, Costa Rica—consistent with its longstanding commitment to peace, human rights, and international law—reiterates its firm call to uphold the provisions of the Convention and to preserve the principles of multilateralism. In the context of concerns surrounding the use of chemical weapons, we continue to follow closely the various allegations regarding potential violations of the Convention, including the recent allegations raised by Germany, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Sweden in relation to the death of Mr Navalny. We encourage the States concerned to provide the necessary information to clarify these matters.

Costa Rica also wishes to acknowledge the support provided by the Technical Secretariat to Member States through its timely, efficient, and highly professional response to requests for assistance, both in situations of conflict and in other contexts. Recognizing that the effective implementation of the Convention depends in large measure on the strengthening of national institutional capacities, we commend the Secretariat's efforts to tailor its activities to regional needs. In this regard, we welcome the forthcoming multi-component chemical emergency response capacity-building exercise (CHEMEX GRULAC), to be held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. We express our appreciation to Canada, Spain, and the European Union for their contributions in making this exercise possible, as well as to all States that have supported other assistance and cooperation initiatives, thereby demonstrating their continued commitment to the work of the Organization.

Finally, with only a few months remaining before the conclusion of his mandate, my delegation takes this opportunity to once again commend the dedicated work of the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, as well as that of the Deputy Director-General, Ambassador Odette Melono, and the entire team of the Technical Secretariat. Throughout their tenure, they have addressed complex challenges with professionalism and resolve. We are confident that their legacy will serve as a guiding reference for the work of Ambassador Sabrina Dallafior Matter as she assumes the leadership of the Organization in the near future.

Mr Chairperson,



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I thank you for your attention and kindly request that this statement be considered an official document of the 111th Session of the Executive Council and that it be published on the OPCW external website and on Catalyst.