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CUBA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR FERMÍN QUIÑONES SÁNCHEZ
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA TO THE OPCW AT THE
TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-general,
Distinguished delegates,

The delegation of the Republic of Cuba welcomes His Excellency Eduardo Ibarrola-Nicolín, Ambassador of Mexico, as Chairperson of this Twentieth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, and voices its confidence that he will lead this session to a successful conclusion. We also welcome the Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference and express our gratitude to the outgoing team for their hard work.

At the same time, we welcome Myanmar and Angola, States that have recently acceded to the Convention.

Cuba fully aligns itself with the words pronounced by the Honourable Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf the States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

Cuba reiterates its position supporting the prohibition and total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. In this context, we reiterate our full support for the Chemical Weapons Convention and our commitment to its full and effective implementation.

Guaranteeing the destruction of the stockpiles declared by possessor States, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, the Verification Annex, and the corresponding decisions adopted by the States Parties, is one of the priorities of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. It is important that possessor States complete their destruction plans.

Cuba, as per the provisions of the Convention, places great importance on the role that the OPCW is meant to play in promoting the economic and technological progress of the States Parties, especially those that are less developed.

We recognise the efforts of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division in implementing Article XI of the Convention, but we regret that its full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation remains an unresolved matter.



Increasing the effectiveness of cooperation and assistance programmes is essential; they must be adjusted to the needs of developing countries.

We voice our serious concern about the use of unilateral measures in contradiction to international law and the letter of the Convention, limiting or making it impossible to extend the broadest possible access of other States Parties to the chemicals, equipment, and technologies needed to develop their respective national industries, and hindering the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI. National measures for the implementation of the Convention must be fully in accordance with the provisions of said article.

While discriminatory measures persist in contradiction to the Convention, countries like Cuba will remain unable to acquire the chemicals and technologies it requires to advance its economic development, including what is necessary to produce medications and other materials.

In spite of the fact that diplomatic relations between the governments of Cuba and the United States of America have been recently re-established, it is our responsibility to recall that the economic, commercial, and financial blockade suffered by my people for over 50 years remains in place and constitutes a violation of this multilateral treaty, specifically with regard to Article XI.

The blockade against Cuba must cease. This system of unilateral sanctions continues to be a hindrance to the development of the chemical industry and other areas of our society, and makes it impossible for Cuba to access technologies and chemicals that are essential for development.

We hope that the facilitation process under Article XI will allow—without further delay—the adoption of an action plan containing specific measures that will benefit developing States Parties, ensure the full, non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI, and make it possible to adequately monitor the implementation thereof, as happens with the Convention's other articles.

We value the efforts made by the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the cooperation demonstrated by its Government in order to fulfil its obligations under the Convention. The results of the investigations conducted by the Fact-Finding Mission must be based on objective information. We highlight the importance of ensuring that the Mission's investigation is conducted in a transparent and professional manner.

We reiterate that a technical and impartial analysis must prevail, in avoidance of any approaches that might play to any specific political agendas. We insist on full respect for the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Syria and its people's right to self-determination.

As concerns the future of the OPCW, we emphasise that all of the decisions that are taken in relation to this matter must be the result of a process based on an integral approach in virtue of which all of the pillars of the Convention are addressed and reflected equally. Within this process, Cuba does not favour the promotion of approaches that intend to place greater focus on some aspects of the Convention to the detriment of others. Our delegation is prepared to continue working seriously and constructively in this regard.

The OPCW's best contribution to a safer world free of chemical weapons lies within the full, non-discriminatory implementation of all of the provisions of the Convention, as well as balance among all of its pillars. In this upcoming process, the States Parties will have to play a determining role while the Secretariat must preserve its technical function and continue contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the Convention.

We state once more that you have all of our support in achieving successful results during the Conference. We request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this Session of the Conference.

Thank you.

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