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BRAZIL

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER LEONARDO GORGULHO FERNANDES
REPRESENTATIVE OF BRAZIL AT THE TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairman,

I congratulate you for presiding over the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties, and reiterate the full support of my delegation towards a successful outcome of this meeting. I would also like to express our appreciation for the Director-General's leadership and the Technical Secretariat's endeavours in carrying out the tasks assigned to the Organisation.

Brazil condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone, under any circumstances. A full and impartial investigation about any use of chemical weapons is of the essence, as are accountability for those responsible for an attack and dialogue and cooperation to preserve the integrity of the Convention. In the case of Syria, in particular, the international community should be united in addressing the use of chemical weapons. Brazil has always favoured consensual decisions by the Executive Council and regrets that this was not the case earlier this month. We sincerely expect to be able to work once again on the basis of consensus in this core matter for the Organisation.

Brazil welcomes the unanimous approval of the United Nations Security Council resolution 2319 (2016), which renewed the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism mandate for a further period of one year. We continue to support the OPCW's fact-finding missions in Syria, as well as the work of the Declaration Assessment Team in line with the mandates given by the Executive Council. We trust that the unresolved issues pertaining to the Syrian initial declaration will be clarified as soon as possible. This is to be done taking into consideration the security situation in its territory, but without losing sight of the Syrian obligation to fully cooperate with the OPCW.

Let me also take this opportunity to recall that this year we celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Mendoza Agreement between Brazil, Argentina and Chile-and later joined by Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay. Prior to the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the parties to this landmark document agreed not to develop, produce, acquire, stockpile or retain, transfer, or use chemical or biological weapons, thus contributing to the consolidation of South America as a region free from weapons of mass destruction.



Brazil welcomes the continued efforts of the Secretariat in fostering the technical arm of the OPCW, with practical results such as the removal and destruction of the remaining chemical weapons from Libya in collaboration with States Parties. This is perhaps the best recent example of the ability of the Technical Secretariat to deliver on the very concrete objectives of the Convention with a forward-looking approach. Brazil also recognises the value of initiatives such as the "OPCW Day", celebrated in May, as well as the establishment of an Advisory Board on Education and Outreach. The Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priorities gives us an opportunity for strategic reflection on the future of the Organisation. We commend and encourage the activities of the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors. The Organisation must develop the ability to identify and address any threats or use of chemical weapons by non-State actors with a sense of urgency and in the most effective manner. The engagement of the Technical Secretariat and of all States Parties is essential in that task.

Brazil attaches great importance to the national implementation of the Convention and, in that connection, is committed to its role as a promoter of international cooperation. In April, Brazil hosted a regional Seminar on the Convention and Chemical Safety and Security, with the aim to support chemical safety and security management in the chemical industry in Latin American and Caribbean countries. With the support of the industry, Brazil also hosted four participants from Burundi, Cameroon, Kenya and Pakistan in the Associate Programme 2016. We continued to be actively engaged in the OPCW Mentorship Programme and assisted Angola to develop the required capacity to implement the Convention. In 2017, further international cooperation activities are being planned in coordination with the Technical Secretariat. This includes a workshop, in May, for 20 participants from the region on the handling, transport, identification, control, declaration and transfer of sensitive material. Next August, the Second International Exercise on Assistance and Protection for participants from Latin America and the Caribbean is to be held in Rio de Janeiro. Additionally, Brazil plans to renew its offering of four positions for the industrial segment of the Associate Programme.

We appreciate the fact that for the last years the Technical Secretariat has been able to present to the States Parties, without detriment to its activities, zero nominal growth budgets. Despite stringent financial and budgetary constraints, the Brazilian government has made a considerable effort to keep pace with its assessed contributions to the OPCW and other international organisations.

This Organisation and the Convention that established it constitute successful tools to the continuous effort of the international community to promote a world free of weapons of mass destruction. As the highest political instance of the Organisation, this Conference must send an unequivocal message of the commitment of all States Parties in that regard. To further the outstanding record of achievements of this Organisation, it is essential that we can operate in a unified and coordinated manner, thus preserving the credibility of the OPCW and its ability to continue delivering results. The Organisation can count on Brazil for this noble purpose.

Thank you.