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CHILE

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MARÍA TERESA INFANTE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CHILE TO THE OPCW AT THE
TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson, distinguished Director-General, and distinguished Representatives of the States Parties, international organisations and agencies, industry, and non-governmental organisations,

I would like to join those who spoke before me in congratulating Ambassador Israng on his election as Chairperson of this Conference. We are confident that he will bring it to a successful close.

I would also like to recognise the effective work of his predecessor, Ambassador Eduardo Ibarrola of Mexico, a member of our region; we were proud of his management of the Conference.

My delegation aligns itself with statement by the Non-Aligned Movement and China presented by Ambassador Haifa Aissami of Venezuela. That statement brought together elements and proposals aimed at advancing our mission with the participation of an appropriate number and representation of countries.

We will take this opportunity to once again recognise the dedication and equanimity with which Ambassador Alireza Jahangiri of Iran has to date coordinated the efforts of the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

In the year that is now coming to a close, the OPCW has demonstrated its successful work in progressing toward a world free of chemical weapons. This progress notwithstanding, we must remain vigilant until our task has been fully completed. For this reason, we call upon the States that have the responsibility of achieving this goal to continue making the efforts to overcome any obstacles and finalise the task at hand in the soonest possible time.

Within this context, we voice our satisfaction with the removal of chemical weapons from Libya and the progress made in their destruction. We value the commitment of this State Party to fulfil its obligations in difficult circumstances, as well as the assistance provided by the Technical Secretariat, and the support of a number of States Parties. It is thus that, among other things, these chemical agents were prevented from falling into the hands of non-State actors. We welcome the explanations provided by the Technical Secretariat regarding Libya's submission of an amendment to its declaration concerning its Category 2 weapons.



With regard to the Syrian Arab Republic, we recognise the significant progress achieved in eliminating the declared chemical weapons and the destruction of chemical weapons production facilities since said country acceded to the Convention. We reiterate our hope that the destruction of the production facilities will be completed in the soonest possible time. We also recognise the support of a variety of States Parties, the intense and risky work of the Technical Secretariat, and the collaboration of the Syrian authorities, and we urge them to continue this cooperation on unresolved matters concerning its chemical weapons programme.

These positive developments cannot be diminished by the continuation of alleged use of chemicals as weapons in that country, which are being examined by the Fact-Finding Mission, whose professional work we have supported.

As a member of the Executive Council, Chile has supported the decisions taken on the elimination of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons, as well as the decisions referred to the Fact-Finding Mission concerning the use of chemical weapons in said country. We have spoken in favour of decisions being taken based on a consensus, a method that our country prioritises.

Since the last conference, we have received the reports of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. The information and conclusions contained in the fourth report confirm that the use of chemicals in Syria has persisted, in violation of the Convention and international humanitarian law, in the circumstances which are set out in the report. As we face these facts, aware of the need to continue progressing towards resolving ongoing matters and with an aim to preserve the capability of our Organisation to take action, we support the decisions adopted by the Executive Council this past 11 November. We were convinced that the Executive Council had to adopt, in a timely manner, the decisions that would lead to strengthening the cooperation needed to move forward with the Technical Secretariat in the face of situations that could compromise the obligations of the States Parties under the Convention and to ensure that its objectives are achieved.

This decision expresses an agreement to develop the necessary paths of collaboration between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Technical Secretariat by implementing the measures set out in said decision, in accordance with the Convention. We must make every possible effort to create the conditions that will facilitate this task.

Now that the mandate of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism has been extended for one more year via Security Council resolution 2319, both of these organisations must continue to set an example of collaboration to advance toward a shared goal, which is to identify those responsible for the use of chemical weapons; those responsible must be held accountable for their acts.

It is not too late to continue to condemn any and all use of chemicals as weapons by any actor, anywhere in the world. Said use constitutes a violation of the Convention and international humanitarian law, and we cannot remain passive in this situation. It is in this spirit that this year, we recall the Mendoza Agreement, which was adopted in 1991 together with Argentina and Brazil, and joined by other South American countries.

Another pillar of the Convention to which we assign particular importance is international cooperation conducive to a greater exchange of scientific and technical information in the

field of the peaceful use of chemistry and the development of industry and trade among Member States. Together with these factors, cooperation serves as an incentive for developing countries to work conscientiously in other areas of the Convention. For this reason, we welcome the programme being developed with Africa, which is of relevance to the full implementation of the Convention.

We have supported the workshop for the review and assessment of the components included in the agreed framework for the full implementation of Article XI which took place last week. At that workshop, our delegation participated by sharing its experience and specific proposals. We are confident that this effort will be continued and grow into a more systematic and sustainable approach, and that it will respond to the real needs of developing countries. We also express our gratitude to the Technical Secretariat for its submission of a list spelling out the ideas that emerged from the workshop, and we are considering with interest the opportunity to continue discussing concrete and viable initiatives for cooperation, while taking into account the ideas that are put forward toward this end and within the framework of Article XI of the Convention.

Bearing in mind the convenience of adequately financing the Organisation's programmes, and particularly those that encourage the commitment of the States Parties with developing chemical industries, we support the draft 2017 Programme and Budget submitted for the consideration of this Conference. We urge the Secretariat to continue developing a systematic approach to the evaluation of its activities.

With a 20-year outlook for this Organisation, where efforts are aimed at strengthening cooperation in preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons by any type of actor, we give particular importance to the work that has been started by the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW under the expert leadership of Ambassador Sabine Nölke of Canada and Ambassador Bruce Koloane of South Africa. We are confident that the methodology that has been put into practice, as well as the integral vision that complements the issues with which a variety of working groups and facilitations are dealing, will produce optimal synergies in a constructive atmosphere conducive to specific and viable proposals ahead of the Fourth Review Conference.

Within this context, we do not forget the other areas of concern for the Organisation, such as the challenge of achieving universality, the destruction of all chemical weapons in their entirety, assistance and protection, effective national implementation, and the needs of the verification regime as it faces new security challenges, technological developments, and the convergence of chemistry and biology. At the same time, our Organisation will continue to transition in a sustainable manner towards a more systematic and lasting cooperation programme with the participation of developing countries with due consideration for the capabilities of all States in an effort to prevent and confront the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors.

The allegations of the use of chemical weapons or toxic chemicals as weapons by non-State actors, specifically terrorist groups, demonstrates the relevance of the discussions being held by the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, led by Ambassador of Ghana Joe Tony Aidoo, and its Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors. Both of these groups provide a forum for the open exchange of points of view and discussions on how the Organisation can continue to contribute to the global efforts in confronting chemical terrorism.

With the valuable contribution of the Technical Secretariat, which has developed documents for discussion, the work of the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors has been focused on three areas: the legal responsibility of non-State actors, measures for preventing the hostile use of toxic chemicals, and others aimed at ensuring an effective response to any such use. This complies with the mandate issued by the Convention. We urge all delegations to continue supporting the ideas and concrete measures in all of the specified areas, as they have been doing, in order to tackle this challenge for the Convention and our Organisation.

One issue that the Organisation should address, in line with the goal to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons, is related to the risk associated with the aerosolisation of toxic central nervous system-acting chemicals and their potential use as Riot Control Agents. These chemicals are a challenge for the Convention, and although Chile does not produce, develop, or use these types of substances as Riot Control Agents, we believe it is appropriate to discuss this matter. We have united with 32 other countries to co-sponsor a document that has been submitted to the delegations, providing a detailed explanation of the reasons behind our concern. We urge the promotion of an open discussion on this matter with the participation of the Technical Secretariat.

We request, Mr Chairperson, that this statement be considered an official document of this Conference and published on the OPCW webpage.

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