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CUBA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SORAYA ÁLVAREZ NÚÑEZ
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE AND
HEAD OF THE CUBAN DELEGATION TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTY-SECOND SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
ON FOSTERING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES IN THE FIELD OF CHEMICAL ACTIVITIES
(AGENDA ITEM 17)**

Mr Chairperson,

The Cuban delegation would like to express its gratitude to Ms Kani Shareef of the Republic of Iraq for the presentation to this Conference of the report on the work conducted during the intersessional period on facilitating Article XI and on the recommendations stemming from the second workshop for the review and evaluation of the components of an agreed framework for the full implementation of Article XI, which took place this past 21 November at the OPCW headquarters.

The proposals and ideas that emerged from the discussion groups at this second workshop, as well as the ideas and elements shared at the first workshop, which took place in 2016, are based on the decision adopted by the Conference at its Sixteenth Session on the components of an agreed framework for the full implementation of Article XI of the Convention (C-16/DEC.10, dated 1 December 2011); thus, we reaffirm that there are numerous precedents when it comes to the consideration of this important matter, and that the requisite base exists for producing specific recommendations for actions to take toward the complete, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI, and which will contribute to ensuring a balanced approach to all of the pillars of the Convention, which is in and of itself an indispensable tool for achieving the goals that it has set.

Article XI has constituted, per se, an incentive for acceding to the Convention for a great number of States Parties that do not possess chemical weapons, and that have a legitimate interest in the developing of chemistry for purposes not prohibited by the Convention, in line with the important mandate of the OPCW to promote the economic and technological progress of the States Parties, particularly for those that are less developed.

The Cuban delegation reiterates its recognition of the Technical Secretariat, and especially the International Cooperation and Assistance Division, for their work, efforts, and support for all of the States Parties in making progress in the implementation of Article XI of the Convention. Many challenges remain on the path ahead, and that is exactly why the States



Parties must take on a more active and committed role to identify gaps and to ensure the transverse implementation of this pillar of the Convention.

It will be necessary to allocate additional human and financial resources for international cooperation and for all related programmes within the existing OPCW budget, bearing in mind the specific aspects, economic realities, and differences in the levels of development of each of the States Parties, as well as regional priorities in order to support both capacity-building programmes, the exchange of knowledge in the field of chemistry, the exchange of best practices in different fields within the purview of the Convention, including the establishment of analytical capabilities, the transfer of technology, materials, and equipment, as well as the generation of initiatives that can be developed jointly with the OPCW Technical Secretariat to assist those States that are facing obstacles when it comes to access to and trade of chemicals and equipment for purposes that are not prohibited by the Convention.

Within the context of considering the future priorities of the Organisation and the preparations for the Fourth Review Conference in 2018, the Cuban delegation views international cooperation as one of the most legitimate opportunities and of great importance for both the present and the future of the OCPW; it must be addressed in an integral, balanced manner in order to undertake the old and new challenges facing the Organisation, and in order to handle all of the aspects related to the economic and technological development of the States Parties to the Convention.

When it comes to the implementation of Article XI, 2018 should be a year of concrete advances. It is time to put an end to the harmful trend of limiting the analysis and discussions of the status of the implementation of this Article to just one session of the Executive Council—traditionally the second session of the year. This issue should have a place at all of the sessions of the Executive Council as appropriate, so as to prevent it from being sidelined by other matters up for consideration by the Council that require delicate consensuses and which have compromised the adoption of the final report of the Executive Council.

This reality reaffirms the necessary to have in place a mechanism to monitor the implementation of Article XI or to strengthen existing spaces in order to guarantee that actions are taken and recommendations are followed for the Fourth Review Conference. The lessons learned in carrying out action plans for other Articles of the Convention, and the discussion of proposed measures on this matter, such as the paper “On the Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention Article XI Compliance” submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement within the framework of the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties, continue to be ongoing and are a source of meeting compliance with future recommendations on this matter.

The Cuban delegation would like to draw the attention of other delegations to our last national document presented at the Eighty-Fifth Session of the OPCW Executive Council (EC-85/NAT.13, dated 12 July 2017) and made available to the delegations at the second workshop on the implementation of Article XI.

Cuba’s document proposes that the States Parties agree upon the following elements, among other pertinent issues concerning the full implementation of Article XI:

1. The definition of the characteristics of a mechanism involving the participation of all States Parties to monitor the implementation of Article XI.
2. An evaluation of the alignment of national implementation measures with the provisions of Article XI.
3. An evaluation of the effectiveness of actions taken for the transfer of chemicals, equipment, technologies, and information.
4. An evaluation of the effectiveness of actions taken for capacity development.
5. Disclosure of information on the implementation of Article XI.

In order to achieve greater effectiveness in the consideration of this matter in 2018, the Cuban delegation requests the Technical Secretariat to present a report on the current status of compliance with Article XI, in which the key challenges, ongoing tasks, limitations, and obstacles identified for full implementation will be reflected in an objective manner, with a view to further consideration using existing mechanisms in the year to come.

The Cuban delegation would make reference to a matter affecting compliance with the Convention, specifically the implementation of the provisions of Article XI relative to the economic and technological development of the States Parties. This concerns examples contained in a national document on the application of unilateral measures and of an extra-territorial nature on the part of the United States of America against Cuba, via an economic, financial, and commercial blockade that limits, restricts, and even prohibits the free exchange of chemicals, equipment, and technologies for purposes that are not prohibited by the Convention among the States Parties. In this regard, we recall paragraphs 9.129 and 9.130 of the report of the Third Review Conference, and specifically subparagraph (q) of paragraph 9.131, according to which the Organisation is to “undertake to review their existing national regulations in the field of trade in chemicals in order to render them consistent with the object and purpose of the Convention”. Cuba categorically rejects the continuation of these unilateral and extra-territorial measures, which are contrary to international law and violate the letter and the spirit of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Thank you.

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