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CHILE

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

Mr Chairperson,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement by the Non-Aligned Movement and China, voiced by Ambassador Haifa Aissami of Venezuela.

We have commemorated 20 years of the OPCW's existence, a period in which this Organisation has been successful in progressing toward a world free of chemical weapons. We welcome the reports from the Russian Federation and Libya regarding the completion of the destruction of their chemical weapons, and we recognise the support of the international community in achieving this goal. We also welcome the progress gained by the United States of America in this area and the efforts of Panama to complete the elimination of old weapons. These achievements are an example of how efforts can be joined, i.e., the verification efforts of the OPCW and the cooperation of the States Parties, in pursuing the goals that have been set out by the Convention.

With regard to the Syrian Arab Republic, we recognise the special circumstances in which progress has been made, with assistance from other Member States, leading to the elimination of declared chemical weapons and progressive advances in the destruction of production facilities.

On the other hand, we are gravely concerned by the results of recent investigations carried out by the Fact-Finding Mission and the conclusions of the seventh report of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, which again point to the use of chemical weapons in that country, in the identified areas. The most recent report by the Joint Investigative Mechanism, which was conducted in a very sensitive environment and the conclusions of which were made after having meticulously evaluated a series of factors, indicates to us that we cannot stop working on the subject of these investigated incidents. We regret that the Joint Investigative Mechanism's mandate has not been extended; its mission responds to sentiments that are shared by the international community.

We once again express our concern regarding the repeated incidents of this nature, no matter the circumstances, the context, or the actors involved. The States Parties cannot renounce its obligations under the Convention, which include not only to declare in full all chemical weapons in possession, but also to adopt the appropriate measures in line with international



law to ensure that these weapons are not used by anyone. Just as each State Party has obligations, the Organisation as a whole must act via the tools that we have given it as we face events that affect the integrity of the Convention. In this regard, we support the seminar entitled “The Chemical Weapons Convention in 2017: What Are the Boundaries to Its Future Evolution?” This seminar took place this past 16 November and helped to broaden an exchange of ideas, in a collaborative environment that was respectful of all the ideas put forward.

We support the work of the Technical Secretariat and the experts on the Fact-Finding Mission and we support the continuation thereof with equal dedication to what has already been carried out to date.

On another matter, the full implementation of the Convention in line with Article VII is a fundamental objective of the Organisation and vital for the trust and security of the States Parties. We will continue to work as we have in the past—including in a format with other interested States as co-organised by the Technical Secretariat and the National Authority of Chile and led by the Director-General as took place this past September in Santiago—in order to continue taking steps to confirm the importance of legislation as a key tool for the full effectiveness of the Convention.

International cooperation with a view, among other things, toward a broader exchange of scientific and technical information with regard to the peaceful use of chemistry and the development of industry and trade among States Members is a pillar of the Convention. That is how it has been discussed within the Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priorities; this was upheld at the second workshop for the review and evaluation of the components of an agreed framework for the full application of Article XI of the Convention. The regional experiences, including the special programme for Africa and in addition to the ideas that emerged from the second workshop under the leadership of facilitator Ms Kani Shaarif, will now be considered at the Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priorities, and we trust that they will be part of preparations for the Fourth Review Conference.

With just one year before the next Review Conference, where we will support the work that our colleague, the Ambassador of El Salvador, will be leading, the work carried out by the Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priorities led by Ambassador Sabine Nölke of Canada and Ambassador Bruce Koloane of South Africa will prove to be of great value.

Regarding the real and potential use of chemical weapons by non-State actors, the discussions held at the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors have been particularly relevant. They have provided a space to exchange points of view on how the Organisation can continue contributing to global efforts aimed at countering chemical terrorism. The decision adopted by the Executive Council this past October on addressing the threat posed by the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors clearly demonstrates how we can approach these issues.

Concerning the management of the OPCW as it completes urgent tasks, and recognising the support of the delegations for a founded discussion, we are confident that this Conference will promptly adopt the draft decision co-authored by Sweden on the rehiring of inspectors, as approved by the OPCW Executive Council.

Another issue that, in our opinion, the Organisation should address is related to the goal of preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons and specifically is the aerosolisation of central nervous system-acting toxic chemicals and their potential use as riot control agents. These chemicals represent a challenge for the Convention, and as such, we support the side event that the delegations of Australia and Switzerland have organised on this matter this week.

We would like to conclude our statement by once again congratulating Ambassador Fernando Arias, who has earned the broad recommendation of the Executive Council to this Conference to be designated as the new Director-General of the Organisation. We would like to take advantage of this opportunity to recognise the format and transparency of the process managed by Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal.

This is also an opportunity to highlight the work and commitment of the current Director-General, Ahmet Üzümcü, during a particularly challenging period, as well as his assistance to all States Parties, including our representation, in managing activities in line with the Convention.

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

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