

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GROUP
(GRULAC), ON THE OCCASION OF THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE
PROHIBITION OF THE USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

1. The Latin-American and Caribbean States, formally proclaimed as a Zone of Peace, reaffirm their commitment to general, complete and immediate disarmament under strict and effective international control which includes the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. All countries of the region are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which constitutes itself a significant contribution to the achievement of a world free of chemical weapons.
2. Conscious of the horrors of the use of chemical weapons, we condemn the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances. In this regard, we reiterate our conviction that those responsible for these events must be held accountable for their actions and not remain unpunished. We acknowledge all efforts made at national level and multilateral fora to this end and we encourage the international community to keep looking for formulas of consensus.
3. We call upon all States not Party to ratify or accede to the Convention without delay, in order to achieve universality. We also call for the complete, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all aspects of its provisions.
4. We reaffirm that the fostering of international cooperation and assistance in the field of activities not prohibited under the Convention is one of its pillars which aims to promote the peaceful use of chemistry for the benefit of technological progress and scientific development.
5. A comprehensive approach in the field of security and cooperation, based on strict adherence to the provisions of the Convention, as well as the necessary balance between its pillars, will strengthen the capabilities of both the OPCW and the international community to prevent the resurgence of chemical weapons, and the threat of their use. The effective national implementation of the Convention will also contribute towards this goal.
6. We recognize the meaningful progress of the international community in the destruction of chemical weapons. We reaffirm that the destruction of all its categories must be accomplished in the shortest possible time within the agreed timeline and according to the CWC and relevant decisions.
7. We express our recognition and support for the professional, impartial and independent work of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW under the leadership of the Director General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü.
8. In order to strengthen the capabilities of the OPCW, acknowledging its technical and scientific scope, and to ensure an effective and full implementation of the Convention, it is necessary to maintain an open and inclusive dialogue within the framework of its mandate. We call upon all States Parties to make all efforts to preserve the culture of consensus that has led this Organization to be the most successful in the field of international disarmament and which made it worthy of the Nobel Peace Prize.