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CUBA

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ZELMYS DOMÍNGUEZ CORTINA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA TO THE OPCW AT THE
SEVENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

The delegation of Cuba welcomes you to the Chair of the Seventy-Fifth Session of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons; we are sure that you will guide it with the experience and professionalism which are your hallmarks.

The delegation of Cuba fully supports the statement made by H. E. Mr Kazem Gharib Abadi, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the OPCW, on behalf of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China, in which he stated clearly the positions we share.

The existence of weapons of mass destruction is a serious threat to international peace and security. In this context, Cuba reiterates its firm position in favour of universal, complete disarmament, under strict, effective international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

My delegation reiterates that the OPCW must continue to be oriented towards the full achievement of the object and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The destruction of all chemical weapons under a strict regime of international verification must continue to be a priority of the OPCW. In this context, the Third Review Conference stressed that this process be concluded in the shortest time possible, conform to the provisions of the Convention and the Verification Annex thereto with full implementation of the relevant adopted decisions. Otherwise, the credibility and integrity of the Convention would be placed at risk.

Cuba supports the creation in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. Cuba would like to recognise the efforts being made by the Syrian Arab Republic and the progress achieved in eliminating and removing its chemical weapons out of Syrian territory amidst a difficult security situation.

Cuba appeals to the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW and to the States Parties of this Organisation to continue to help the National Authority of the Syrian Arab Republic to implement the Convention and to continue to put forward the necessary resources to assist it



in complying with the provisions thereof. We also urge all States Parties to strictly observe the regime of the Convention for protecting confidential information.

Furthermore, we support efforts that might lead to a political solution of the conflict and which would respect the sovereignty, independence and integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic and the right of its people to self-determination.

The OPCW has an important role to play in promoting the economic and technological process of the States Parties, especially of the less developed ones.

We value the efforts made by the Technical Secretariat and the International Cooperation and Assistance Division in the full, effective, non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI of the Convention, but there are matters still outstanding which we cannot forget. Cuba considers it unacceptable that certain States Parties continue to apply unilateral measures that limit, restrict and even prohibit the free trade in, and transfer among States Parties of, chemicals, equipment and information in the field of chemistry for peaceful purposes.

The unjust, criminal blockade imposed by the Government of the United States of America on Cuba for over 50 years, is a flagrant violation of the letter and spirit of the Convention, in particular of Article XI thereof. We demand the immediate removal of these discriminatory restrictions, which are explicitly prohibited under the Convention.

In the final document of the Third Review Conference, and in the reports approved during the Seventy-Fourth Session of the Executive Council and the Eighteenth Conference of the States Parties, the analysis of Article XI was especially relevant. The minimum necessary conditions were created to consider, without further delay, the proposal for a plan of action for the full, effective, non-discriminatory implementation of this important Article, as submitted by the members of the Non-Aligned Movement of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China. Cuba insists that it is essential to hold an in-depth discussion as soon as possible on this proposal for a plan of action, within the framework of the facilitation process already under way on this topic, and welcomes the unofficial consultation held, as a first step in the discussion process.

Allow me to finish, Mr Chairman, by stressing the readiness of the delegation of Cuba to work actively and constructively with you and the other delegations. I repeat that you may count on Cuba's full support and cooperation.

I should be obliged, Mr Chairman, if this statement be circulated as an official document of the Seventy-Fifth Session of the Executive Council.

Many thanks.