



Statement by  
Ambassador Piragibe S. Tarragô,  
Permanent Representative of Brazil to the OPCW,  
at the 76<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Executive Council

The Hague, 8 July 2014

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to congratulate you on your chairmanship of the 76<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Executive Council and pledge our cooperation for its successful conclusion.

Mr. Chairman,

I cannot help but begin by elaborating briefly on the main issue that has monopolized our attention since last September: the elimination of Syria's stockpile of chemical weapons. We should congratulate again the US-Russia agreement that has enabled the OPCW to prepare the corresponding program. That agreement stands as a hallmark of cooperation in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. It deserves our recognition. Contrary to some dire predictions, and misperceptions of some State Parties, the Syrian Arab Republic has endeavored, under rather unfavorable circumstances, to comply with its main obligations under the CWC. We are happy to see that it is now one step closer to be considered a territory free of weapons of mass destruction.

Much to our regret, though, there are still some disturbing issues to be clarified, like the alleged use of chlorine gas last April, and the attack against the Fact Finding Mission. My country has condemned the violence perpetrated against the Mission. It is our understanding that this session should be devoted essentially to uphold the Convention insofar as that alleged use. Firstly, by instructing the Organization's

experts to proceed to investigate the information obtained through reliable opened sources and government officials. The experts should do it under strict security conditions. Secondly, by reaffirming the authority of the Convention, strongly reprimanding the use of chemicals for hostile purposes by anyone, under any circumstance, as is the role of this Council. The manner in which the experts will operate on the ground should be the subject of an understanding in some form or another, in particular with the Syrian authorities, which have the primary responsibility to cooperate in the clarification of the incident.

We also take note with satisfaction of the overall report of the Director-General on the Syrian programme, and welcomes its conclusions. My government concurs with the need to elucidate the uncertainties surrounding the initial inventory of chemical weapons, and evaluates that the last meeting in Moscow on the destruction of tunnels and hangars was a positive development. It is our assessment that the key actors have pragmatically focused on tangible results, instead of reaffirming well-known positions. This display of willingness to find convergence is encouraging as we discuss solutions that are more adaptable to the particular situation in Syria.

The Brazilian authorities are also of the view that the OPCW is making significant progress, in a professional and impartial fashion, to surmount differences and close gaps related to the initial declaration of chemical weapons. The Technical Secretariat has demonstrated to be well informed about the activities related to Syria's weapons of mass destruction program. It has shown a wealth of technical and political expertise in order to engage with the Syrian side in a constructive environment, required for the confidence-building expected.

Mr. Chairman,

It seems likely that the OPCW will continue to struggle for some time with circumstantial questions related to the Syrian chemical weapons programme. Despite any doubts that may arise on the possibilities of that country reacquiring



such capabilities in the future, the Council should continue to apply the instruments available in the Convention to keep the course in that programme. The CWC provides us with tight controls over the materials and technology used to make such weapons, as well as a robust verification system to monitor compliance, transparency instruments on relevant holdings of weapons and related materials, enhanced export controls, and mechanisms for information sharing. Needless to say that all these monitoring elements can help in allaying the dangers of reemergence - in Syria or in any other country – of chemical weapons, or of using laboratorial chemicals in contravention to the CWC.

Mr. Chairman,

This session comprises two special topics, on Articles VII and X. On Article X, it gives me great pleasure to announce that, from 26 to 30 August 2014, Brazil will host the III Regional Assistance and Protection Course on Chemical Emergency Response. It will be the first exercise of such a nature in Rio de Janeiro. Brazil, however, has since 2009s provided training in assistance and protection for 85 representatives of regional partners and Portuguese-speaking countries. My country's approach to these multi-faceted courses has been of treating themes that are of particular interest to the beneficiary countries. It also seeks to fit their content to meet the interests of more vulnerable economies, such as small-island developing States (SIDS) and land-locked developing countries (LLDC), in keeping with the different industrial characteristics of the beneficiaries.

The Brazilian Government encourages other State Parties, in particular the developed ones, to engage into similar activities and further assist smaller partners to enhance their technical capabilities in assistance and protection. More sensitization and training activities can significantly contribute to capacity-building, strengthen the resilience against the risks posed by chemical materials, and diffuse monitoring, decontamination and evacuation techniques, especially among the least developed countries (LDCs).

As for the provisions on national implementation, we are of the view that national authorities should rely on legislation and enforcement means that are able to provide effective deterrents and remedies in case of non-compliance. However, we also consider that the Council has to recognize that the legislative process can be complex and will not always be easy to accomplish. Legislative changes need to conform to the overall policy direction of governments. They may well have to compete with other national priorities. Thus, the Council should continue to examine the scope to upstream the national implementation measures, and consider, as appropriate, methods to facilitate their compliance and their more efficient management.

Finally, my government takes note with satisfaction of the recommendations on education and outreach. By making a better use of outreach vehicles, we can make the Convention better known for operators. It can thus acquire greater relevance and address the non-proliferation agenda, as it takes on board perspectives from a wider range of stakeholders.

Thank you.