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CUBA

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

Mr Chairman,

My delegation welcomes you to the Chair of the Seventy-Sixth Session of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which we are sure you will conduct with your characteristic experience and professionalism.

Cuba fully endorses the statement made by His Excellency Dr Alireza Jahangiri, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Organisation, on behalf of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China, in which the positions we share are clearly expressed.

Cuba would like to recall once more that the existence of weapons of mass destruction is a serious threat to international peace and security. Therefore, my government reiterates its firm position in favour of general, complete disarmament under strict, effective international control, to include the prohibition and destruction of all weapons of mass destruction.

My delegation considers that this Organisation must focus on the 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 for all the Member States of this Organisation. In this connection, the Third Review Conference stressed that this process should be completed as quickly as possible, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and the Verification Annex thereto, and with full implementation of the relevant adopted decisions. Otherwise, one would be placing the credibility and integrity of the Convention in jeopardy.

Cuba welcomes the successful conclusion of the operation to destroy and remove from Syrian territory all declared chemical weapons materials, within an unprecedented time-scale and under exceptionally difficult conditions.

In that context, Cuba recognises the efforts made by the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as its constructive cooperation and the commitment it has demonstrated in destroying and removing its chemical weapons from its territory, amidst a complicated security situation.



Moreover, Cuba recognises the close international cooperation and assistance from the States Parties, as well as the cooperation between the OPCW and the United Nations.

We have repeatedly raised the point that the OPCW has an important part to play in promoting the economic and technological process of the States Parties, particularly of the developing countries.

We appreciate the efforts made by the Technical Secretariat and the International Cooperation and Assistance Division towards the full, effective, non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and are grateful for the conduct in this building of the Seminar on Article XI, held between 11 and 13 June. However, matters that we must not forget still remain outstanding. Cuba considers it unacceptable that certain States Parties continue to apply unilateral measures which limit, restrict, and even prohibit, free trade in, and the 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 against Cuba for over 50 years, constitutes 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 banned by the Convention.

Cuba welcomes the recent informal consultations, held in this connection in February and June, as a first step in the process of discussion, but there is still a long way to go, which has, we feel, been unnecessarily delayed.

In the final report of the Third Review Conference, the reports adopted during the Seventy-Fourth and Seventy-fifth Sessions of the Executive Council, and at the Eighteenth Conference of the States Parties, the analysis of Article XI was accorded particular relevance. Just as during the seminar and consultations held on this topic, the need was demonstrated for an analysis to be made, without further delay, of the proposal, advanced by the members of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China, for an Action Plan for the full, effective, non-discriminatory implementation of this important article.

We trust that the facilitation will continue and that the document to be prepared by the Technical Secretariat will be analysed as soon as possible, as was agreed during the last informal consultation held in June, without failing to include in the integral discussion the elements of the proposal advanced by the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

Seizing the opportunity presented by the discussion as part of the agenda of this Council of the topic of Education and Outreach and Article X, Cuba is grateful to the delegation of Argentina for organising and holding a Regional Meeting on Education in the Responsible Use of Knowledge Relating to Dual-Use Chemicals, held in Buenos Aires, from 7 until 9 April this year.

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

I should be obliged if this statement could be circulated as an official document of this Seventy-Sixth Session of the Executive Council.

Many thanks.

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