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We recognise the efforts of the International Cooperation and Assistance Branch toward achieving the full implementation of Article XI of the Convention, although we once again point out the necessity of adopting without further delay an action plan with specific measures benefitting less developed States Parties, guaranteeing the full and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI, and facilitating adequate monitoring of implementation, as happens with other articles of the Convention. The non-discriminatory implementation presupposes the elimination of restrictions among States Parties, with the exception of those established by the Convention itself. We all know that these restrictions persist.

As States Parties, we all—without exception—have the legitimate right to participate in the broadest possible exchange of chemicals, equipment, and information within the field of chemistry for purposes that are not prohibited by the Convention. At the same time, we are all obliged to facilitate said exchange. Regrettably, this process continues to be restricted, as some States continue to apply unilateral measures that limit—even prohibit—said exchange, thus hindering the development of countries like ours.

We reiterate that the economic, commercial, and financial blockade suffered by the Cuban people for more than 50 years remains intact and constitutes an unquestionable violation of this multilateral treaty, and Article XI in particular. The blockade against Cuba must end. This system of unilateral sanctions continues to restrict the development of the chemical industry, the public health system, and other areas in our society; it makes it impossible for Cuba to access technologies and critical chemical consumables.

With regard to the chemical weapons destruction process in the Syrian Arab Republic, my delegation recognises all of the efforts made by the government of said country, as well as its ongoing and constructive cooperation with the Technical Secretariat. We value the strong commitment demonstrated by the government of this nation, in spite of the very complex security situation, which it regrettably continues to face.

Regarding the ongoing investigations involving this State, my delegation again voices the need to search for ways to complete them satisfactorily, based on an impartial, serious, and objective analysis of all available information from reliable sources, including the Syrian Government.

As regards the existing discussion on the legal responsibility of non-State actors, my government reiterates its concerns about the fact that there is not an international consensus on this matter and insists upon the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, as the best way to ensure that this type of weapon does not fall into irresponsible hands. The OPCW’s contributions to the fight against terrorism ought not be viewed as something beyond the mandate of the Convention, but as a result or consequence of achieving its goals.

We again state that the discussion on the future of the OPCW must be an inclusive, transparent, open, and non-discriminatory process; it must reflect the interests and concerns of all of the States Parties. We insist that a comprehensive approach prevail in this process, and that all of the pillars of the Convention are addressed equally.

Thank you very much.