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**ARGENTINA**

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR HORACIO SALVADOR  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ARGENTINA TO THE OPCW  
AT THE EIGHTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson, Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal,

The delegation of Argentina voices its great appreciation for your dedication and efforts, and states its unwavering willingness to hear what you have accomplished during the information selection process, allowing us today to determine—with a consensus—a candidate for the future Director-General.

With your leadership, we have successfully reached a consensus at the height of the challenge presented by this important task. We have been able to find our way among the candidates, who without a doubt are all, without exception, distinguished by their high quality, aptitude, and extensive careers. The dialogue that prevailed demonstrated the best that this Council has to offer during the decision-making process—and reaching a consensus.

We would like to recognise all of the candidates, without exception, and especially the efforts for and interest in this Organisation that they have demonstrated, and for the dedication they have shown in the process.

It is with great pleasure that we congratulate Ambassador Fernando Arias of Spain for having received the consensus support of the Member States of this Executive Council for the position of Director-General. We firmly believe that his professional abilities, his impressive diplomatic career, his well-known tact and political sensitivity are key for this post. The next step should be to continue progressing toward a balanced gender distribution and a balanced geographical distribution within the Technical Secretariat, and to promote the balanced development of all of the pillars of the Convention as we face the future.

I would like to welcome the information provided by Director-General Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü in his opening statement on the state of the Organisation, and I would also like to acknowledge the other reports presented by the Vice-Chairpersons.

On 27 September this year, the Director-General congratulated the Russian Federation on the verified destruction of that country's declared chemical arsenal. This announcement marks a feat of enormous symbolism and importance in achieving the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We join others in highlighting and emphasising the auspiciousness of this accomplishment this year in particular, as the twentieth anniversary of the OPCW.



Similarly, we would also like to underline the announcement of the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons in Panama.

We hope that other possessor States will be able to accelerate the destruction of their chemical arsenals. At the same time, this progress also gives us reason to hope that the efforts being made on the path to universality of the Convention will be reinvigorated. We reiterate our call for the few countries that have not yet acceded to the Convention to do so at the soonest possible time and without any provisos.

It is with great concern that we see that the Technical Secretariat has reported that designated OPCW laboratories have confirmed the use of sarin or a sarin-like substance in an incident alleged to have taken place in March this year in the Syrian Arab Republic. It is inconceivable that the use of chemical weapons continues today. We value the work of the Technical Secretariat and the team of experts on the Fact-Finding Mission and know that they will continue to work with the same dedication demonstrated in this investigation to date. In this regard, we reiterate our support for the continuation of the work of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism aimed at identifying the perpetrators so that they can be brought to justice.

The Director-General has also provided us with an updated overview on the status of the activities that the OPCW is carrying out in the Syrian Arab Republic. The results of the most recent high-level discussions with Syrian authorities appear to indicate that a great many issues have yet to be resolved. We believe that efforts must be redoubled with the required force and determination to ensure that the Technical Secretariat and the Declaration Assessment Team receive adequate responses.

With regard to the draft Programme and Budget for 2018, which we have discussed these past sessions, we are confident that the result of the constructive discussions held during information sessions will be positive. We have joined the consensus on the draft decision to be taken to the Conference of the States Parties. Nevertheless, we would like to emphasise that the budget allocated for international cooperation and assistance activities has remained at the same level at the latest exercises, despite the growing demand in these areas.

The actions that the Organisation is taking in international cooperation for economic and technological development are key for the future of the Organisation and we should continue to expand support for these activities in a balanced manner.

We also wish to address the praiseworthy work of the Co-Facilitators of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW, H.E. Ambassador of Canada Sabine Nölke and H.E. Ambassador of South Africa Vusi Bruce Koloane. They have received and channelled, in an inclusive and open manner, all of the proposals that were presented, which bodes well for the success of the efforts being made ahead of the next Review Conference. Likewise, we would like to highlight the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and its Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors, facilitated by H.E. Ambassador Momar Diop and H.E. Ambassador of Chile María Teresa Infante, respectively.

Argentina will continue to support the efforts aimed at promoting national capacities by holding regional courses in a variety of fields for Latin America and the Caribbean. Specifically, this year we once again participated in the industrial segment of the Associate

Programme, under which an Argentine enterprise welcomed recipients of international grants. We also collaborated with Guatemala in the implementation of the Mentorship Programme.

I am also pleased to announce that at the end of 2017, we will be contributing to the programme of workshops that we are supporting in our country, specifically by adding a regional workshop on the study of chemistry and environmental protection. On 5 October, the Technical Secretary published Note S/1539/2017 (and Corr.1, dated 18 October 2017 in English only) calling for nominations for the workshop, which will be held in Buenos Aires on 11 and 12 December 2017.

We have no doubt that this workshop will generate a great deal of interest in Latin America and the Caribbean, as this is something new, both for the region and for the Organisation.

Thank you.

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