



OPCW

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COLOMBIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JUAN JOSÉ QUINTANA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF COLOMBIA TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson, Mr Director-General, distinguished delegates,

I begin this statement by expressing our gratitude to the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat as a whole for their good work in the intersessional period. We have carefully listened to the opening statement by the Director-General who, as always, is an excellent guide for the work of this Council. We again welcome you, Mr Chairperson, and wish you success this session, during which you will have our full support.

I will first address the important notice regarding the finalisation of the chemical weapons destruction programme of the Russian Federation. We congratulate this country and this Organisation for what indubitably represents a milestone in accomplishing the goals set under the Convention. Equally, we highlight the progress made in the destruction of Category 2 weapons outside the territory of Libya, as well as the announcement that these activities will be finalised at the end of this year. We again voice our gratitude to the generous assistance provided by a number of States Parties in this regard. We urge other possessor States to complete the destruction of their remaining chemical arsenals by the designated deadlines, including abandoned chemical weapons, and thus achieve the desired goal of the complete and global elimination of this type of weapon.

We also congratulate the Chairperson of the Executive Council for the excellent management of the election process for the new Director-General and his leadership in coming to a consensus on the best candidate to nominate at the next regular session of the Conference of the States Parties. From this point, we wish Ambassador Fernando Arias all the best; we are fully confident that he will know how to direct this Organisation and successfully focus on the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons.

The fact that the high-level consultations aimed at clarifying unresolved issues related to the initial declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic have produced so few substantial results is worrisome. Nevertheless, we urge the authorities of said country to maintain the dialogue and to expand its efforts in order to find a solution to the list of concerns that remain unresolved. Likewise, we make a special call for their continued collaboration with the Technical Secretariat to complete the verification of the destruction of declared facilities and facilitate the inspections requested by this Council.



We reiterate in the strongest possible terms our condemnation of the use of chemical weapons in Syria and our support for the work of the Fact-Finding Mission and the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mission.

With regard to the draft Programme and Budget for next year, we welcome the balanced allocation of resources and the respect for the principle of zero nominal growth. We are pleased to note that over the past five years, the Organisation's budget has in fact demonstrated a downward trend which, among other things, is a sign of efficient resource management. We also voice our gratitude to the Technical Secretariat for the timely presentation of the draft and the consultations that were held ahead of discussions.

It is crucial that we now focus on preparing for the Fourth Review Conference in 2018. In this regard, we urge the Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priorities to continue its work, and we are confident that the results of these efforts will constitute a fundamental contribution for the meetings planned for the end of next year. We also appreciate the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and its Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors, and await with interest the substantive report from the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO), to be presented at the end of this year; the ABEO's efforts will surely be of great importance when preparing for the Review Conference.

I request that this statement be considered an official document of this session and published on the Organisation's webpage.

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