



OPCW

Executive Council

Eighty-Seventh Session

13 – 15 March 2018

EC-87/NAT.27

13 March 2018

ENGLISH and SPANISH only

ARGENTINA

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

Mr Chairperson, Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal,

The delegation of Argentina reiterates its gratitude and support for your leadership at this session of the Council.

We have listened carefully to the report by the Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, on the Organisation's state of affairs, as well as the other reports presented by the Vice-Chairpersons.

For the sake of brevity, I will comment only on a few of the many subjects that we will be spending more time discussing as this Eighty-Seventh Session develops.

With regard to the information on the activities that the OPCW is carrying out in the Syrian Arab Republic, it continues to appear necessary to us to continue the efforts toward closing unresolved issues as soon as possible, particularly pertaining to aspects of the work of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT).

We have also received information about different investigations that have been carried out by the Fact-Finding Mission. Within this context, we once again reiterate our support for this Mission, which we believe to be central in the fight against the use of chemical weapons. This Mission already has a set path. On that same note, we would recognise the experience that has been gained, and we urge the Director-General to continue adapting the methodology to new challenges.

The Director-General also referred to the status of the destruction of declared chemical stockpiles. It is with great satisfaction that we welcomed the news of the official completion of the destruction of the stockpile declared by Libya as well as the remaining stockpiles in Iraq.

This progress, which is capped by the verification of the destruction of the full stockpile of the Russian Federation several months ago, also leads us to expect that the march toward the complete destruction of these weapons is gaining momentum and that the road to the universality of the Convention is taking on new energy. We renew our call to the few countries that have not yet acceded to the Convention to do so as soon as possible and without any conditions.



We must refocus our attention and redouble our efforts to forever rule out the use of chemical weapons and the use of chemicals as weapons. The allegations made this morning during general debate concern us greatly and must be clarified.

We condemn the use of chemical weapons or chemicals as weapons by anyone, anywhere, for any reason. Those responsible must be brought to justice.

The use of chemical weapons by non-State actors is a reality that we must confront from this multilateral Organisation, within its specific mandate as stipulated by the Convention. We wish to recognise the work being carried out by Ambassador Momar Diop of Senegal, and Ambassador María Teresa Infante of Chile as the heads of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism (OEWG-T) and its Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors, respectively.

Without a doubt, the decision on non-State actors adopted on 13 October 2017 (EC-86/DEC.9) by this Executive Council has served as an additional catalyst for the activities that we, the States Parties, must carry out and the work that the Technical Secretariat performs.

Within this context, we urge the Secretariat to continue to explore various ways to collaborate with States Parties in order to ensure that their national laws are adequate. The objective is to ensure that relevant crimes are given standardised definitions so that those committing said crimes related to the Convention can be brought to justice. Among other innovative aspects of the 2017 decision, there is a suggestion that States Parties look into the possibility of establishing new reciprocal legal aid agreements with a view to guarantee the accounts provided by non-State actors.

The upcoming Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention allows us to consider everything that has been carried out to date and agree upon additional steps that we should adopt.

During this session, we will be receiving reports from the Open-Ended Working Group for the Fourth Review Conference, led by H.E. Ambassador I Gusti Agung Wesaka of Indonesia, and the Vice-Chairpersons of the Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priorities, H.E. Ambassador Sabine Nölke of Canada and H.E. Ambassador Vusi Bruce Koloane of South Africa.

The delegation of Argentina welcomes the development of deliberations of both Working Groups. We find it adequate to arrive at the Review Conference with a consensus-backed draft report, thus avoiding a duplication of efforts. For this reason, we support the ongoing actions to integrate recommendations on future priorities to the programme of the Working Group for the Fourth Review Conference as soon as possible.

Argentina will continue to support efforts to promote national capabilities via regional courses on a variety of subjects for Latin America and the Caribbean.

In this regard, we would like to highlight the results of the regional workshop on chemistry for safety, security, and environmental protection, which was organised by our National Authority in collaboration with the OPCW Technical Secretariat, the International Foundation for Science (IFS), and the National Institute of Industrial Technology (INTI),

which took place in Buenos Aires on 11 and 12 December 2017. This workshop was a success and is the first time a workshop on this matter was held in our region.

On that same note, we would remind you of another important event to be held soon in Buenos Aires, from 16 to 20 July 2018. The National Authority will organise a new course on managing chemical safety, security, and protection in a laboratory setting. We urge countries in the region to participate.

A final note, Mr Chairperson. We urge the Technical Secretariat to multiply its efforts to ensure a solid gender balance of its members at all levels, as well as balanced geographical representation.

Thank you.

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