



OPCW

Executive Council

Fifty-Sixth Meeting
9, 17, 23 and 24 November 2017

EC-M-56/NAT.12
9 November 2017
ENGLISH and SPANISH only

CUBA

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR SORAYA ÁLVAREZ NÚÑEZ
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA TO THE OPCW AT
THE FIFTY-SIXTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson, Mr Director-General, and distinguished delegates,

Cuba condemns the use of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, by anyone, anywhere.

The Cuban delegation is participating in this discussion to reiterate the positions that have been voiced at Executive Council sessions, as well as at the Fifty-Fourth and Fifty-Fifth Council meetings for the consideration of the chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and its production facilities, as well as the incidents related to the alleged use of chemicals and chemical agents in that country.

All States Parties have witnessed the acceleration of this process and the efforts via which the Syrian Arab Republic adhered to the Chemical Weapons Convention, in spite of the complex situation within that country.

The reports submitted by the Technical Secretariat state that the process of destroying the chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and its production facilities continues to move forward. We call for the continuation of these cooperative efforts between the Syrian Arab Republic and the OPCW Technical Secretariat in order to reach a solution for unresolved matters.

The Cuban delegation refers in general terms to the issue under consideration regarding the fact that the seventh report of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism has not been presented, and requires an exhaustive analysis from a technical point of view. It has been noted in this report that other investigative procedures have been applied that are not provided for in the Convention or the Verification Annex.

The Cuban delegation believes that the OPCW should focus on the technical evaluation of whether or not the conclusions that were put forth in the seventh report are congruent with the mandate and in compliance with the established procedures in conducting the investigation.

The Cuban delegation also believes that the methodology used by the Fact-Finding Mission in preparing its most recent report differs in some aspects from the basic principles set out in the Convention, and that these elements are those that must be the subject of consideration primarily at the Organisation.



In terms of examples, the following give rise to concern:

- (a) the investigations into the incidents of alleged use of chemicals and chemical agents in the Syrian Arab Republic were not conducted at the sites where these incidents took place;
- (b) the investigations were conducted remotely and do not guarantee compliance with the key principle set out in the Convention regarding the chain of custody for the transport of evidence and samples, and other procedures that were applied.

It is critical that as soon as it becomes possible to do so, a large-scale investigation be conducted at the identified sites into the alleged use of agents or chemical weapons, and that this is done in compliance with the broad spectrum of methods set out in the Convention in an effort to prove, without a doubt and without any ambiguity, the accusations and conclusions that are presented in the reports by the Fact-Finding Mission and the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. It is not possible to come to definitive conclusions until they have been corroborated or until samples have been delivered in keeping with the high standards set by the Convention and the OPCW.

The Cuban delegation has on many occasions emphasised that the politicisation of unresolved technical matters regarding the Syrian dossier presents an obstacle to the search for permanent and acceptable solutions for all.

Thank you.

--- 0 ---