



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Sixteenth Session
28 November – 2 December 2011

C-16/NAT.23
28 November 2011
ENGLISH and SPANISH only

MEXICO

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JORGE LOMÓNACO
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MEXICO AT THE
SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,

I wish to express my sincere congratulations on your election as Chairperson of the Sixteenth Conference of the States Parties and assure you of my personal support, as well of that of my delegation. I am certain that your experience and diplomatic skills will lead us to a successful conclusion of this Conference. I also wish to recognise your predecessor, Ambassador Julio Roberto Palomo Silva, Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the OPCW, for his able conduction of the Fifteenth Conference of the States Parties. Furthermore, I salute the presence of Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, Director-General of the OPCW, and that of the personnel of the Technical Secretariat who accompany him this morning and who support him every day.

Mexico's positions on the different items of the agenda are well known. Therefore, and out of respect to the time of the other delegations, I will limit my statement to reflect on few issues.

For Mexico there is no doubt that, during the OPCW's almost 15 years of existence, outstanding feats have been achieved in matters of disarmament, non-proliferation, national implementation measures and international cooperation, among others, in compliance with the purposes and objectives of the Convention for the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. We have plenty of reasons to feel proud about our Organisation. Jointly, States Parties and the Technical Secretariat have established a unique regimen, a model in the field of disarmament.

Unfortunately, everything we have accomplished so far could fall apart or be seriously damaged. A few wrong decisions or an obstinate paralysis over priority issues could suffice. In this context, Mexico is seriously concerned about the fact that we initiate this Sixteenth Conference without relevant recommendations from the Executive Council that are essential for the effective operation of the OPCW. This is not the first time, which adds to the uneasiness we experience as this situation could become a habit that it is neither desirable nor appropriate.



The First Conference of the States Parties, held in May 1997, adopted its own rules of procedure and those of the Executive Council. The explicit objective of those of the Council was, precisely, to make the proceedings executive, honouring its name. Nonetheless, through the years we have been adopting non-written practices that do not always bring about positive results, lead to unnecessary financial expenses and take up excessive amount of valuable time.

It is true that organisations evolve and adapt to new realities, but it is also true that practices based on individual interests, and frankly speaking, also based on myths and false assumptions, prevent them from working expeditiously. In our case, among other things, we do not make anymore the distinction between consensus and unanimity; we have forgotten that in a democratic environment, as it is in the case of an international organisation, the aspiration should be to accommodate the interests of the minority and not that the majority becomes hostage of the minority.

When becoming party to an international legal instrument, all and each one of the States express the intention to abide by the specific rules of that instrument and, at the same time, manifest the commitment and political will to multilateralism. Therefore, we are obliged to contribute constructively wherever feasible and commit ourselves to place the collective good before our particular interests. That is the spirit of multilateralism.

Mexico believes that the time may have come to start considering necessary adjustments to some of the non-written practices of the working procedures of the policy-making organs, particularly of the Executive Council. Among other issues, we could ask ourselves: how many sessions of the Council are needed every year?; Is it appropriate to place the weight of decisions lengthy and intensively negotiated on the discussions of report language during the adoption of the final report, many times reflecting occurrences that did not take place or decisions that were not taken during the formal sessions?; Is it viable in the medium term to take decisions exclusively by unanimity—what we wrongly label as consensus—when in many occasions it has become the end itself, even more important that the substance?; Is it practical and appropriate to continue establishing linkages between and among issues even at the risk of endangering their progress?

This is the third time in five years that we initiate the Conference's session without a recommendation on the programme and budget for the OPCW. Needless to say its adoption is vital to the operation of the Organisation, particularly in times of global economic and financial crisis and during the process of adjustment to the future work of the Technical Secretariat. After three months of informal and formal consultations, one ordinary and one extraordinary session of the Council we do not have a recommendation. Are we going to end up bargaining without a technical basis for the number of inspections to the chemical industry once more? Are we going to include international cooperation in the mix? Are we going to link budgetary issues with other items of the agenda, only minutes after rhetorically rejecting this practice?

Today I want to pay tribute one more time to Ambassador Peter Goosen (South Africa), Chairperson of the Executive Council. His commitment, dedication, talent and passion allowed us to decide, just few days ago, to recommend to the Conference the adoption of a decision regarding the final extended deadlines on the total destruction of the chemical weapons. The draft is not perfect and, as it is commonly said, its content leaves everybody equally unhappy, a reflection of a delicate but well achieved balance. My delegation is ready

to adopt this decision and urges other delegations to do the same without delay. Time has come to think on the system we have built and on the importance of protecting it.

Mr Chairperson,

We call upon all delegations to show flexibility and political will in adopting all the decisions that matter to all of us in the Sixteenth Session of the Conference. As we have said before and demonstrated time and time again, we pride ourselves to often walk in the middle. We intend not only to continue this path but also to approach the issues with open minds, flexibility and spirit of compromise. In other words, we are here to work with others, openly and transparently, to find a solution rather than furiously defending one position. We want to help, be part of the solution, not of the problem. We invite other delegations to do the same.

I would like to request this statement to be issued as an official document of the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

Thank you.

--- 0 ---