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**VENEZUELA**

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE  
NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT THAT ARE STATES PARTIES TO THE  
CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION AND CHINA  
DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HAIFA AISSAMI MADAH  
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VENEZUELA TO THE OPCW  
AT THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China (NAM CWC States Parties and China).

Mr Chairperson, Excellency Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal,

At the outset, I would like to welcome you back, as Chairperson of the Executive Council and express our confidence in your able leadership to steer the sessions of the Executive Council during your chairmanship to successful conclusions.

We express our thanks to the Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, for his informative and comprehensive report delivered at this session and appreciate his continued efforts and those of his team in the Technical Secretariat to promote further the role of the Organisation in the international disarmament regime and to carry out its functions under the Convention.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China, while committed to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Convention for the realisation of its objectives and purposes, acknowledge that the implementation of the Convention will contribute to international peace and security.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China attach great importance to the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention and strongly urge States not Party to the Convention to accede to it without further delay and preconditions. We also emphasise that States remaining outside the Convention should not be able to take advantage of any of the benefits it offers to the States Parties.

The existence and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continues to pose a threat to international peace and security. Consequently, the NAM CWC States Parties and China



reiterate their long-standing principled position toward the achievement of general and complete disarmament, under strict and effective international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction in line with the first paragraph of the preamble of the Convention.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China continue to underline that the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as a weapon anywhere by anyone and under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the provisions of the Convention, legal norms and standards of the international community. We also reaffirm that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China condemn the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups and are deeply concerned by the threats of the use of chemical weapons by them and request the Technical Secretariat to investigate in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention all reports on the use of chemical weapons and keep the States Parties informed accordingly.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China express their deep concern regarding the attempt to accuse States Parties of using chemical weapons on the basis of unsubstantiated allegations made by media reports or other open sources, including non-governmental entities. This trend can cause a dangerous precedent in the future work of the OPCW.

Noting with serious concern that the final extended deadline of April 2012 for the destruction of chemical weapons was not met by certain possessor States Parties, the NAM CWC States Parties and China stress that the destruction of chemical weapons is the fundamental and top priority of the Organisation and urge the remaining possessor State Party to expedite all necessary measures to ensure its compliance with the provisions of the Convention and relevant decisions of the policy-making organs.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China welcome the completion of the full destruction of the chemical weapons stockpile previously possessed by Libya and the Russian Federation under OPCW verification. We also welcome the report of the Director-General regarding the completion of the destruction of the entire declared stockpile of chemical weapons remnants in Iraq.

We also wish to emphasise the determination expressed by the Third Review Conference that the destruction of all categories of chemical weapons, namely old chemical weapons, abandoned chemical weapons and chemical weapons stockpiles, as the fundamental pillar of the Convention, shall be completed in the shortest possible time in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and its Annex on Implementation and Verification, and with the full application of the relevant decisions adopted by the policy-making organs.

Recalling the decisions of the Executive Council with respect to the elimination and destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons, and the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons production facilities, the NAM CWC States Parties and China welcome the substantive efforts made and progress achieved in this regard. We look forward to the continuation of a successful cooperation existing between the OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic on all issues.

We take note of the work done so far by the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), and look forward to receiving its reports on its ongoing activities. We expect the approach followed by the FFM teams would be uniform and consistent.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China attach great importance to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of Article XI and emphasise the need to strengthen and speed up efforts in this regard. The NAM CWC States Parties and China encourage all the States Parties and the Technical Secretariat to take into consideration our position paper on the implementation of Article XI circulated on 1 December 2016, during the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

We also underline the importance of the promotion of international cooperation for the benefit of States Parties through the transfer of technology, material and equipment for peaceful purposes in the chemical field and removal of any discriminatory restrictions such as unilateral sanctions against other States Parties that are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Convention, affect the Convention's long term viability and have an adverse impact on the existing level of trust among the States Parties.

Bearing in mind the importance of the adoption of an action plan for the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI, the NAM CWC States Parties and China believe that the States Parties shall provide concrete recommendations and proposals to the Fourth Review Conference.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China welcome the holding of the Third Review and Evaluation Workshop of the Components of an Agreed Framework for the Full Implementation of Article XI on 2 May 2018 in order to continue the debates on agreed elements which emerged from previous evaluations workshops, including the C-16/DEC.10, dated 1 December 2011 and the List of Ideas arisen from the second workshop in November 2017. We kindly request that the results of these workshops be presented and considered as part of the discussions of the OEWG- IV Review Conference as a contribution to this process.

NAM CWC States Parties and China continue to encourage the widest and active participation of States Parties in these annual workshops, and agreed that they are additional inputs for the promotion of the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI.

We welcome the efforts made by the Technical Secretariat to enhance the implementation of Article XI, which requires continuous collaboration between the Technical Secretariat and the States Parties. In this regard, the NAM CWC States Parties and China recognise the work done by the facilitator during the Second Review and Evaluation Workshop of the Components of an Agreed Framework for the Full Implementation of Article XI.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China welcome the Director-General's statement related to the fourth phase of the programme to strengthen cooperation with Africa on the Convention. We are looking forward to seeing the programme continue in an efficient and sustainable manner, primarily under the regular budget allocation.

The NAM CWC State Parties and China recognise the importance of education and outreach programmes in achieving the main objectives of the Convention, and in this regard, we

welcome the work done by the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach. We also welcome all regional meetings held to contribute in formulating recommendations on education and outreach.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China encourage all States Parties to fully implement their obligations under Article X. We stress the need for all States Parties and in particular those in a position to do so, to contribute to the Voluntary Fund for Assistance to ensure the ability of the Technical Secretariat to develop a state of readiness to provide timely, adequate and effective assistance to respond to the increasing demand of States Parties. This assistance delivery should be fully consistent with the provisions of the Convention and upon States Parties' request.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China pay respect to victims of chemical weapons and their families, and in light of the decision adopted by the Conference of the States Parties at its Sixteenth Session (C-16/DEC. 13, dated 2 December 2011), appreciate the States Parties for their contribution to the Trust Fund for the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons and encourage all the States Parties to actively contribute to the Trust Fund.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China encourage the States Parties that are in a position to facilitate and make materials and equipment-related assistance available to those States Parties which are in need, upon request as well as to assist and support the victims of chemical weapons, without unnecessary restrictions.

In the context of the implementation of Article VII, the NAM CWC States Parties and China encourage all the States Parties and the Technical Secretariat to continue providing meaningful assistance and technical support to the States Parties in enhancing their national capacities, upon request. The Technical Secretariat could then come up with appropriate and tailor-made solutions to overcome the practical difficulties and resource constraints encountered by individual States Parties in carrying out their national implementation measures.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China re-emphasise that the employment of personnel in the Technical Secretariat to be fair and transparent and stress that it shall be in accordance with Article VIII, paragraph 44, of the Convention. It is also imperative to ensure that the Technical Secretariat observe an equitable geographical and balanced gender representation, particularly at the professional level.

With regard to the future priorities of the Organisation, the NAM CWC States Parties and China believe that the discussions need to be brought within the parameters of the policy-making organs guided and driven by States Parties and the main focus of the Organisation should remain in the complete elimination of all categories of chemical weapons, as one of the main pillars of the Convention.

We recognise the important work done so far by the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW. The NAM CWC States Parties and China encourage continued discussion to formulate a document in this regard in order to be considered at the Fourth Review Conference. We reiterate the importance of this working group and encourage its close cooperation with all regional groups. The NAM CWC States Parties and China

would appreciate that all the inputs received so far, whether convergent or divergent, be taken into account.

Bearing in mind the importance of the upcoming Fourth Review Conference to be held from 21 to 30 November 2018, the NAM CWC States Parties and China emphasise the important work done so far by the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fourth Review Conference under the leadership of the Ambassador of Indonesia. The NAM CWC States Parties and China note with satisfaction the endorsement by States Parties of the Working Group's Programme of Work, and further encourage all States Parties, in close consultations with their regional groups, to actively participate and contribute to the transparent, balanced, and consensus-driven discussions in the Working Group.

The NAM CWC States Parties and China commend the continuation of the important work on the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and the Sub-Working Group on non-State actors. We also take note of the diverse views on this issue and encourage further dialogue and consultation in accordance with the Convention. We also take note of the Director-General's initiative to convene a conference on countering chemical terrorism to be held in The Hague on 7 and 8 June 2018.

On the follow-up of the Third Review Conference recommendations, the NAM CWC States Parties and China believe that the transparent, comprehensive and balanced approach shall prevail for implementation of these recommendations. In this context, selective approaches shall be prevented. We recall that the Matrix was developed as a mechanism to comprehensively monitor the implementation of the Third Review Conference recommendations. The NAM CWC States Parties and China therefore welcome the update on the progress-made by the Technical Secretariat.

In conclusion,

Cognizant of the need to have a unity of purpose and of upholding the principles set out in the Convention, NAM CWC States Parties and China calls on all States Parties not to polarise or politicise the work of our esteemed Organization. Furthermore, we encourage States Parties to work cooperatively and accommodatingly in order to achieve consensus and the successful conclusion of this session.

Thank you.

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