



OPCW

Executive Council

Ninety-Fourth Session
7 – 9 July 2020

EC-94/NAT.52
7 July 2020
ENGLISH and SPANISH only

EL SALVADOR

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR TO THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Mr Director-General, Mr Council Chairperson, Your Excellencies, Representatives, Members, and Observers of the Executive Council, Distinguished Authorities of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and Friends,

El Salvador begins its statement expressing due recognition of the notable work carried out by the outgoing Chairperson of the Executive Council, H.E. Andrea Perugini, Ambassador of the Italian Republic, whose performance was impeccable and ensured full transparency and the participation of all of the parties involved in addressing the delicate matters of the Organisation in the period from 2019 to 2020.

The world and the way in which we carry out our activities have changed radically due to the impact of the pandemic declared by the World Health Organisation (WHO) at the start of 2020.

My delegation, while conscious of the fact that the pandemic has affected all of the nations represented here to various degrees, finds it appropriate to express its profound grief and solidarity regarding the loss of life that has marked daily life in our societies; we would also like to voice our strong sense of hope for all of the collective efforts that are being carried out among our countries to ensure a better world for current and future generations.

My delegation welcomes you in particular, Mr Chairperson, as well as the Director-General, for all of the efforts you have made in the preparatory process to guarantee the conduct of this session of the Council safely, protecting the health of its participants and, above all, in compliance with the local measures of protection and in line with the Regulations of this Council.

Having begun our role in the Council's work as a full member last May, we underscore the relevance and importance within the context of the Organisation's work, as this is the first time that El Salvador is serving as a member of the Council. What is more, it is starting its membership with the privilege of the Chairmanship, an honour that was granted unanimously by the members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC) following the nomination of H.E. Ambassador Agustín Vásquez Gómez, who was supported equally by all of the members of the Council at the Ninety-Third Session of this Council. For this reason, I would like to take advantage of the opportunity to express gratitude for the support we have received and the trust that has been deposited in our country to carry out such an important role within the Organisation.



El Salvador is a country that has always demonstrated its strong commitment to international security and the promotion of peace. It will honour in the best possible manner its participation in the work of the Council, contributing actively and proactively, as demonstrated by its participation during the preparatory process and the conduct of the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in November 2018, with the aim of continuing to contribute to the achievement of our common goals of completely eliminating the use of chemical weapons and promoting the non-proliferation thereof.

Our country recognises the efforts of the Technical Secretariat in promoting the exchange of knowledge and experience among the States Parties in the Latin American region, with the active participation of the National Authorities. In this regard, our country firmly maintains its interest in hosting the regional workshop on chemical security and protection, which was scheduled for September this year, and has been postponed until further notice due to current circumstances.

In El Salvador's view, it is critical to ensure that the OPCW is equipped with an institutional governance framework that provides for, with responsible predictability, the day-to-day needs and functions of the Organisation, especially human resources, with excellent management skills and a high level of professionalism. We must pool our efforts regarding the consultations led by the Ambassadors of Australia and Uruguay, for whom we renew our support for and commitment to this mission as they carry out their work.

In this context, my delegation recognises the important achievements made by the Technical Secretariat with regard to gender parity within the Organisation's management. We urge the Director-General to maintain this healthy and important trend and to expand it as much as possible across the other areas within the Organisation.

El Salvador recognises and congratulates once more the Director-General for his dedication and effective management in the promotion, education, and launch of the future Centre for Chemistry and Technology, an initiative driven with vision and a clear perspective for transforming the Organisation's current laboratory into an innovative and advanced pillar, both in the processes of investigation, analysis, and training as well as in capacity-building activities.

In conclusion, my delegation thanks the Director-General of the OPCW and the Coordinator of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) for the presentation of the first report of the IIT last April. This report contains a series of conclusions regarding the identification of the perpetrators behind the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, in the cases for which the OPCW's Fact-Finding Mission was able to determine that chemical weapons were used or were likely used in Syria.

In this regard, El Salvador reiterates its principled position condemning in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons or the use of toxic chemical products as weapons by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstance, and no matter the reason. Any action to the contrary is reprehensible and constitutes a grave violation of the Convention and the standards of international law.

In conclusion, I would like to request that this statement be distributed as an official document of this session of the Council and published on the OPCW's webpage.

Thank you.