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GUATEMALA

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JORGE ALFREDO LEMCKE ARÉVALO
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA
TO THE OPCW AT THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairman,

I would like, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, to extend to you my sincerest congratulations on your election as Chairman of this Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. We have no doubt at all that successful management of the Session is guaranteed, given your diplomatic experience and personal abilities, which will bring the work of this Conference the results we all seek.

It is also appropriate to recognise the outstanding work of your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Peter Goosen, who, as Chairman, led with dedication and effort the Conference that brings us together.

Moreover, we wish Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, the present Director-General of the Organisation, and who has a remarkable track record and broad experience in matters of disarmament and non-proliferation, the best of good fortune as he continues to direct with great success and vision, the present and future of the Organisation; I should not like to miss the chance to thank the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation and to wish it and its staff every success during this Session.

As in previous years, it is our duty to be vigilant that the work of this Organisation be appropriate and efficient. Precisely this way of managing our activity has led the Organisation to be awarded as high and prestigious recognition as the Nobel Peace Prize for 2013.

There can be no doubt that the present time is one of unequalled importance for the Organisation. It seems to us that we must take advantage of this in order to complete all the tasks before us as well as possible; we must assure the whole world, and reaffirm to it, not only how well-deserved the award was, but, even more importantly, our commitment and obligation to achieve peace by the total and complete destruction and elimination of all these weapons of mass destruction.

Turning to the delicate topic of full compliance with Article VII of the Convention, Guatemala lies in Latin America, a continent which for the most part is a vast area free from weapons of mass destruction. Our continent has proudly been able to build a tradition of



consensus on non-proliferation and is free of this kind of weapon. We encourage one and all to continue along the road and the work that will bring us to this desired result which, although it seems only a dream or an aspiration, humanity constantly demands of us. We must not give up or waste time in our quest for this target –humanity will only thank us for it.

Guatemala is a State which respects and promotes international peace and justice, for which reason we should like to take this opportunity to highlight and recognise the remarkable commitment of the great possessor States and the huge efforts they have made to achieve, within the shortest possible time, the total destruction of these arsenals. We also applaud the recent adhesion to the Convention of Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic; we encourage them, as well as the remaining possessor States and States Not Party, to follow these examples, and, without exception, achieve the ideal of universality of the Convention, complete implementation thereof, thus reaching the objective of a world free from chemical weapons.

That is why the Delegation of Guatemala to the United Nations New York Headquarters made clear – by its co-sponsorship of recently adopted Resolution 2118 (2013) of the United Nations Security Council which established the mechanism for verification and destruction of chemical weapons in Syria –the need for accountability, the urgency of a process of political transition, and the matter of due compliance. Having said that, we believe that this step is highly significant, because of its intrinsic worth and, as was said by our Permanent Representation to the United Nations, “it freshens the air and stimulates renewed efforts directed at solving the basic problem: putting an end to violence, resolving the humanitarian situation, and meeting the needs of the Syrian people. That is why we have consistently supported the final communiqué of the Action Group for Syria dated 30 June 2012”.

Through its National Authority, and thanks to efforts made jointly with the Congress of the Republic and with judicial and executive agencies, Guatemala has been making progress towards fulfilling its obligations under the Convention, has quite recently even carried out a profound legal reform, which has led to the identification of offences, which are pursued and punished as offences under the Convention and other international instruments that Guatemala has ratified and incorporated into its internal legislation. At the moment, other projects are being examined and analysed; these will mean the total implementation of the Convention in our internal legal system. In this context, we are grateful for, and continue to seek, support and cooperation from the Organisation in training and technical legal assistance to develop our legislation and make appropriate amendments to what already exists. The Government of the Republic, and the people, of Guatemala thus repeat their commitment to the quest for global peace and justice.

We are committed to continue working jointly with the OPCW in all the tasks relating to non-proliferation and disarmament. Along those lines, Guatemala, through its Permanent Representation, repeats its commitment to, and total cooperation with, the Organisation, as well as its full support for the Director General and the Technical Secretariat in all these activities, with strict adherence to the Convention and rules of procedure.

Finally, we take the liberty of encouraging all States Parties to preserve intact the spirit of the Convention by which we are governed, the agreements reached during the Sessions of the Conference of the States Parties, the recent Third Review Conference, as well as the consensus reached at each and every meeting we have held in this distinguished Organisation.

I should be obliged if this statement could be considered and circulated as an official document of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Many thanks.

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