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INDIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PRADEEP KUMAR RAWAT
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Ambassadors,
Distinguished delegates,

I welcome you to the Ninety-Sixth Session Executive Council. I am confident that under your able leadership Mr Chairperson, we will have a successful session. On behalf of the Indian delegation, I assure you of full cooperation and constructive participation in the deliberations of this session to realise our common objectives.

I would like also to thank the Director-General for his comprehensive statement and wish to commend him for his leadership as well as the Technical Secretariat for their efforts towards implementing the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”), especially in the context of the continued challenges posed by the pandemic.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador Fikrat Akhundov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

As an original signatory to the Convention, India attaches high importance to the objective of full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention. We should continue to strive towards achieving the ‘universality’ of the Convention. My delegation recalls the commitment made by every State Party to the Convention to destroy all chemical weapons. The process of destruction of the remaining chemical weapons stockpiles should be completed as early as possible.

We note the reports of the Director-General on progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. We value the continued engagement between the Technical Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward to an early resolution of all outstanding issues.

Mr Chairperson, I would like to reiterate India’s principled position on alleged use of chemical weapons that investigations of alleged use must be conducted in strict compliance of the provisions and procedures laid down in the Convention, and concerns must be addressed



through consultation and cooperation among all parties concerned. India remains committed to working together with States Parties to the Convention in ensuring its effective implementation.

On the draft decision on the “Understanding Regarding the Aerosolized Use of Central Nervous System-Acting Chemicals for Law Enforcement Purposes”, my delegation would like further consultations and discussions towards a well-considered understanding proposed in the decision with due account for the object and purpose of the Convention.

My delegation commends Ambassador Mathew Neuhaus of Australia and Ambassador Laura Dupuy Lasserre of Uruguay, the co-facilitators on organisational governance issues, for taking forward the discussions on important matters that have a bearing on the effective functioning of the Technical Secretariat. We look forward to further consultations to achieve progress on various organisational governance issues. Similarly, my delegation looks forward to achieving further progress under the coordination mechanism to revitalise existing facilitations to advance the full and effective implementation of all provisions of the Convention, as outlined in the 4 October 2019 position paper of the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

I take this opportunity to state that India believes that it is in the best interest of the Organisation that the appointment of the next External Auditor of the OPCW, which would be considered at Part II of the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, should be made in time, and in an objective and fair manner, giving due consideration to the technical merit of the candidates.

I conclude with the request that this Statement be circulated as an official document of the Ninety-Sixth Session of the Executive Council and posted on the external server and the public website of the OPCW.

Thank you.

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