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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-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

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

Permit me to begin by welcoming back Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki as the Chairperson of the Executive Council (“the Council”). I am confident that this session will be smooth and successful under your able leadership. I would like to assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

I thank the Director-General for his comprehensive statement, as well as the Vice-Chairpersons for their reports on the activities conducted under their respective clusters of issues.

India associates itself with the statement of Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China, delivered by the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the OPCW, Ambassador Fikrat Akhundov.

India attaches high importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”), and stands for its full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation.

We hope that the remaining chemical weapons stockpiles would be destroyed soon.

We note the updated reports on the progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. We urge continued and effective cooperation between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Technical Secretariat for early resolution of all outstanding issues.

India remains firmly opposed to the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone, and continues to underline that any investigation on alleged use of chemical weapons must be conducted in strict compliance with the provisions and procedures laid down in the Convention.

My delegation takes note of the Draft Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2022–2023, and the draft decision on the draft Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2022–2023. India continues to urge return to the past practice of separate draft decisions on the Programme and Budget, which provides States Parties the opportunity to consider and decide on several but distinct elements of the Budget.



We commend the co-facilitators on organisational governance issues, Ambassador Matthew Neuhaus of Australia and Ambassador Laura Dupuy Lasserre of Uruguay for their dedicated and constructive efforts in finding common ground on our discussions on the amendment of the OPCW tenure policy. We look forward to having further consultations on all organisational governance issues, and I assure my delegation's full cooperation in this regard. India would like to once again emphasise that such a decision shall be taken by consensus even if it means that we will have to make extra efforts.

We urge for early convening of meetings to achieve further progress in the full and effective implementation of all provisions of the Convention, as outlined in the statement of the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, dated 4 October 2019.

We note the merits of the draft decision on allowing the convening of Council meetings or sessions in extraordinary circumstances. We would like to place on record our appreciation for the co-sponsors of the draft decision for making it clear that they would only adopt the draft decision by consensus, thus respecting the OPCW traditional practice of consensus-based decision making. India remains willing to engage further to find consensus on the draft decision.

I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session and posted on the external server and the public website of the OPCW.