



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

101st Session  
4 – 6 October 2022

EC-101/NAT.20  
4 October 2022  
ENGLISH only

**ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ALIREZA KAZEMI ABADI  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO  
THE OPCW AT THE 101ST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the position of Chairperson of the 101st Session of the Executive Council and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in discharging your duties. I would also like to thank Director-General Fernando Arias for his comprehensive report delivered at this session.

The Islamic Republic of Iran associates itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Fikrat Akhundov, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the OPCW, on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

While we are celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry-into-force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, it still suffers from certain implementation challenges. The Convention, as the most comprehensive disarmament treaty, embodies a delicate balance between the obligations and rights of the States Parties. It is imperative to ensure the balanced implementation of all fundamental principles and pillars of the Convention. In light of this, it is worth mentioning that while the endeavours of the Organisation in the areas of elimination of chemical weapons, universal adherence, and verification have earned the recognition of the international community over the past 25 years, there has been a lack of the progress expected in the implementation of other pillars, namely Articles X and XI on assistance and protection and international cooperation, including the international exchange of scientific and technical information, chemicals, and equipment.

The Organisation has been facing challenges in recent years, which are mainly due to the short-sighted political interests of certain States Parties, such as the attempts at the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties in 2018 to deviate the OPCW from its mandate. It is regrettable that during the past years, a lot of damage has already been done to the credibility and integrity of the Convention and the Organisation. The credibility and reputation of the Organisation must be upheld at all costs.

In this regard, the Islamic Republic of Iran would like to express its deep concern over the non-consensual decision adopted by 82 votes at the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties in 2018 entitled "Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use" (C-SS-4/DEC.3, dated 27 June 2018). The attribution mechanism and subsequent establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team are in flagrant contravention of the



Convention and place the authority, integrity, and effective functioning of the OPCW in jeopardy. Every effort should be made to ensure that the Organisation performs its mandate in full conformity with the object and purpose of the Convention. The credibility of the OPCW must be preserved in all circumstances.

Due to the finite financial and human resources of the Organisation, it is of high necessity that the programmes and activities of the Organisation and its subsidiary bodies be confined to the ambit of the Convention and refrain from encroaching on the mandates of other international organisations.

The destruction of chemical weapons is one of the main pillars of the Convention, and it is essential to achieve the object and purpose of this instrument and the enhancement of peace and security of the States Parties.

The Convention is the first disarmament treaty that includes a timeframe for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction; against this backdrop, the full destruction of chemical weapons has not yet been completed. In this regard, the sole possessor State Party should comply with its obligations under the Convention, and accelerate its efforts by making use of all relevant technologies and methods to complete the destruction of its chemical weapons stockpiles in the shortest possible time.

On the other hand, after the completion of the elimination of declared chemical weapons, the promotion of trade and international cooperation in the peaceful application of chemistry must be the main priority for and function of the OPCW. Given the socioeconomic importance of the chemical industry in the sustained development of our society, as well as the comprehensive verification regime of the Convention, it is high time to remove unnecessary export controls and any unilateral restrictive measures that hamper or impede cooperation in the peaceful application of chemicals.

On the issues related to the Syrian Arab Republic, the Islamic Republic of Iran supports the continuation of the cooperation between Syria and the OPCW within a mutually agreed framework of collaboration. In this connection, we welcome the continuation of the high-level meetings between the Syrian authorities and the OPCW. My delegation reiterates its concern over the exertion of any external pressure on the genuine cooperation between Syria and the Technical Secretariat. It also firmly believes that cooperation and dialogue have proven to be the best mechanism to resolve remaining technical issues. The technical issues need to be resolved through cooperation and dialogue, and by avoiding political pressure, which has proven time and again to be a failed strategy that would jeopardise the whole process.

With regard to the resumption of the activities of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), it is expected that the Technical Secretariat consider, in a professional and impartial manner, the relevant provisions of the Convention on the designation and selection of the inspectors of the OPCW, and observe the sovereign rights of the Syrian Arab Republic in carrying out its functions.

My delegation considers the decision adopted at the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to suspend certain rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic, a dangerous precedent that would complicate the relationship between Syria and the OPCW and could in no way contribute to the resolution of the remaining outstanding issues.

In this regard, we are also deeply concerned by the Israeli regime's unprovoked attacks against Syrian declared chemical facilities; these attacks are a gross violation of international law. The Organisation and all Member States must convey a strong message to the Israeli regime to respect the sovereignty of a State Party to the Convention and not to endanger the safety and security of chemical facilities.

The Convention assures States Parties that their economic and technological development for peaceful purposes will not be hampered by implementing the obligations under the Convention. This assurance is of the utmost importance, since international cooperation in chemical trade and technology for peaceful purposes is a compelling incentive for accession. It further encourages States Parties, especially developing countries, to participate more actively in the work of the Organisation and the implementation of the Convention. Therefore, failure to fulfil this assurance through removing impediments to the economic and technological development of States Parties would irreparably impair the integrity of the Convention.

Article XI, as it stands, establishes a general principle on how the States Parties should frame their national policies in the field of chemical cooperation and activities, and how the Organisation should implement verification procedures. Despite this clarity, there are still some national tendencies, as well as certain export control regimes, that violate and undermine the letter and spirit of Article XI. In this context, the Islamic Republic of Iran firmly believes that the OPCW Director-General must use all means, capacities, and powers for the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of the provisions of Article XI, which is an essential element in the realisation of the object and purpose of the Convention.

The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches paramount importance to the universality of the Convention, so that no one remains outside of the Convention and no chemical activity remains outside of the verification regime of the Convention, which in light of the emerging threats posed by terrorist groups, would contribute to maintaining international peace and security, and would prepare the foundation for achieving a world free of the threat of any category of weapons of mass destruction.

In this regard, we welcome the efforts and initiatives of the Technical Secretariat to keep contact with non-parties in line with the Action Plan for Universality of the Convention (EC-M-23/DEC.3, dated 24 October 2003) and relevant decisions adopted by the policy-making organs to encourage them to accede to the Convention at the earliest possible time and without any preconditions.

Due to its humanitarian nature, the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons is of high significance, and the States Parties and the Secretariat should practically and substantially take the necessary actions to ensure that this humanitarian obligation is rightly met. At present, the necessary support extended to this network does not correspond to its long-term goals. Therefore, it is quite necessary to consider the possibility of direct allocation of resources within the OPCW's regular budget.

Challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic remind us of the importance of strengthening the existing humanitarian arrangements of the OPCW, such as the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons, as well as the necessity to explore new ways and means to update and safeguard the humanitarian work of the Convention with a special focus on the treatment of the victims of chemical weapons.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as the largest victim of chemical weapons in the contemporary era, reaffirms its resolute commitment to and continued support for the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention, and strongly rejects the imposition of discriminatory restrictions, particularly unilateral sanctions against the Member States of this Organisation, as doing so directly affects the health and medications of the victims. It is noteworthy that more than tens of thousands of victims of chemical weapons in Iran are now under unlawful and inhumane unilateral sanctions, while they are in urgent need of specific medications and treatments. We now require tangible measures to be taken by the Organisation to alleviate the suffering of the victims of chemical weapons. In this context, the Islamic Republic of Iran, along with the other Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Party to the Convention and China, requests that the Technical Secretariat explore mechanisms, including cooperation with the World Health Organization, to assist the victims of chemical weapons.

My delegation notes with appreciation that the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference has started its work under the chairpersonship of H.E. Ambassador Lauri Kuusing of Estonia. We hope that the Fifth Review Conference will achieve substantive results within an inclusive and transparent framework. To this end, every effort should be made to avoid further politicisation and polarisation within the Organisation and pave the way towards mutual understanding and cooperation. The OPCW, as a professional and technical organisation, should maintain impartiality and professionalism, and perform its functions in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, while remaining vigilant against any abuse of rights and powers under the Convention.

In conclusion, regarding the recent extensive relaxation of COVID-19 regulations in the Host Country and elsewhere, my delegation strongly believes that normal meeting procedures in the Organisation could and should be restored to enable all delegations to fully participate in the deliberations. We expect that the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties will be held in the normal format with the standard arrangements should the COVID-19 situation remain stable.

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

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

- - - 0 - - -