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PAKISTAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SULJUK MUSTANSAR TARAR
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN
TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE
OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,

My delegation welcomes you at the helm of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties. We have full trust in you. Please be assured of my delegation's full support as you guide us through this session.

We align with the statement made by the honourable Ambassador of Azerbaijan on behalf of Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

We also commend the work being done by Director-General Fernando Arias to deliver on the Chemical Weapons Convention ("the Convention") mandate in these challenging times.

The COVID-19 related restrictions have been drastically eased and it is heartening to see so many delegations present for Conference of the States Parties. We hope this augurs well for our work especially as we look forward towards the Fifth Review Conference in May 2023.

This year we marked the twenty-five years of entry-into-force of the Convention, a momentous journey that we all undertook together. The Convention has been one of the most effective disarmament treaties in world history. It draws strength from its comprehensive and non-discriminatory approach towards disarmament, and as affirmed in the Convention that:

“Each State Party to this Convention undertakes never under any circumstances to develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile or retain chemical weapons, or transfer, directly or indirectly, chemical weapons.”

We have achieved considerable success as 99% of declared stockpiles have been destroyed. Consensus, cooperation, dialogue and mutual respect led to this success.

Commemorating twenty-five years of the Convention and annual Conference of the States Parties is a moment for us to reinforce global support and commitment to the aims and objectives of the Convention. In the difficult and fractured world of multilateral disarmament, this annual Conferences in the past always showed the way through its “consensus” based decision making.

However, of late we reached some decisions by departing from the tradition of consensus. Lack of consensus, Mr Chairperson, as history and practice tell us, is not beneficial for global disarmament and would not yield anything except politicisation. We are at an important inflection point to think beyond politics and for the larger good of the Convention and the OPCW.



It remains our hope that the traditional strength of the OPCW to progress through dialogue and consensus will be sought and restored during this session of the Conference of the States Parties.

My delegation condemns any use or threat of use of chemical weapons as per the Convention. There cannot be any reluctance to condemn the use of chemical weapons nor to investigate credible reports of such use. However, these cannot become justifications for arbitrary actions that have no basis in the Convention. Progressive erosion in the integrity of the Convention must stop for the sake of maintaining global support for this unique disarmament treaty. All States Parties to the Convention need to recognise their obligations and implement them fully.

We have noted the reports on the progress of the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. It is our hope that outstanding issues can be resolved mutually in a cordial manner.

It is our belief that cooperation and capacity building under Article XI of the Convention should be extended to all States Parties. Pakistan is a steadfast supporter of the aims of international cooperation under this Article. Pakistan also recently collaborated with the OPCW in organising the international advanced training course and exercise on assistance and protection against chemical weapons.

We firmly believe that in order to fully implement the provisions of Article XI, concerns of countries regarding hurdles in knowledge and technological sharing need to be addressed. We call upon the OPCW Technical Secretariat to identify and take stock of the need of capacity building of all States Parties. As is the case of the Africa Programme, we hope to see more such success stories. In this context the role of the new Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre) will be important. We welcome the recent note by the OPCW Technical Secretariat on the progress made on the ChemTech Centre thus far. Pakistan has contributed to the ChemTech Centre and remains available to explore new avenues of cooperation including through capacity building measures and knowledge sharing.

Mr Chairperson, the Convention requires that due regard should be given to as wide a geographical basis as possible in hiring of Technical Secretariat staff. There is a lack of equitable representation in the Technical Secretariat, and we urge the Director-General to address the situation expeditiously.

We welcome the Open-Ended working Group (OEWG) for the Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference, and the regular informal consultations that have taken place. We are hopeful that we will be able to achieve consensus in the forthcoming Review Conference.

Pakistan hopes that the OPCW would revert to the tradition of consensus and continue to hold the Convention as a guide to achieve its vision of a world free of chemical weapons in which chemistry is used for peace, progress, and prosperity of our future generations. Pakistan has consistently worked for the implementation of Chemical Weapons Convention. Pakistan will continue to stress that the Convention is implemented in a manner that promotes the economic and technological interests of all States Parties.

I would like to request that this statement be issued as an official document of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties and posted it on the OPCW external server and the public website.

I thank you.