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BANGLADESH

**STATEMENT BY H. E. AMBASSADOR M RIAZ HAMIDULLAH
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Members of the scientific community, civil society, and NGOs,
Excellencies,

Let me commend H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela on his assumption as Chairperson of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties. My delegation is confident of his wisdom and leadership in steering the business of this session towards a successful conclusion. Our felicitations also to the newly elected members of the Bureau and other officials. I would also place on record our appreciation to H.E. Ambassador Bård Svendsen of Norway, the outgoing Chairperson, for deftly steering the deliberations of the previous Session of the Conference of the States Parties. Let me also reaffirm our fullest support to Director-General Fernando Arias. Under his leadership, we appreciate the works discharged by the Technical Secretariat (the Secretariat).

Mr Chairperson, we thank the Director-General for the detailed and substantive report that he presented. We appreciate the persistent efforts of the Director-General and the Secretariat in ensuring full and effective implementation of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”), even amidst the challenging circumstances of the Covid pandemic. We appreciate the Secretariat for resuming in-person sessions of OPCW in full, including resumption of regular inspections of the chemical facilities.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Convention and China.

Bangladesh, as an original signatory to the Convention, upholds the principle of ‘never again’. Chemical weapons must not be used by anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances. We reiterate so driven by stipulations of the Bangladesh Constitution that calls for complete disarmament. The foreign policy guidance envisioned by our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman encourages us to renew our commitment to achieve a world permanently free of chemical weapons; and to contribute to international security and stability, complete disarmament and global economic development.



We thus acknowledge the progress made in destruction of 98.46% of the declared Category I chemical weapons stockpile in the United States of America and the developments in destruction of the abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) of Japan in China. We look forward to OPCW meeting the goal of destructing the stockpiles and the ACW well before the Convention enters into the post-destruction phase next year. We hope, the Organisation would continue guiding us in the evolving landscape of chemicals and related technologies to sustain global peace and security as we head towards the post-destruction phase of 2023.

My delegation looks forward to a meaningful outcome from the upcoming Fifth Review Conference that should enable the OPCW to withstand as an organisation of the future, which should guide the States Parties to have effective collaboration in terms of capacity building through knowledge transfer, sustainable and climate-friendly chemical industrialisation and safe and secured use of chemicals.

In the context of achieving the ultimate goal of a world free of chemical weapons, accomplishing universality of the Convention is key. It is also essential to prevent re-emergence of chemical weapons and its access by non-State actors. Bangladesh thus calls upon the remaining States not Party to the Convention yet, to ratify and accede to the Convention without delay.

Mr Chairperson, for our better future, Bangladesh looks at OPCW to be steadfast as the prime Organisation for peaceful use of chemicals, chemical industry while enhancing chemical laboratory capabilities, chemical-knowledge promotion, advancing preparedness and exchange programmes and advanced research. We therefore value and support effective functioning of the ChemTech centre following its planned launch next summer.

We urge the Secretariat to launch innovative, educational, capacity building and outreach programme, institutional collaboration and strengthening the network of the national authorities, laboratory upgradation and platform on regional best practise sharing.

Bangladesh continues to fulfil its obligations under Article VII of the Convention i.e., relating to national implementation measures. While we appreciate the active encouragement and support of the Secretariat, the Secretariat needs to assist the States Parties from the developing world to fully implement their national obligations and to deal with any threat of chemical terrorism through tailor-made capacity-building programmes.

As we committed to ensure gender balance in our national plan, Bangladesh would reiterate its continuing call for gender balance and geographical diversity in staffing within the Secretariat. It is crucial for reflecting OPCW's true international character. I support and commend Director-General Fernando Arias for his leadership in making progress in this regard, particularly in promoting gender parity at the Organisation's top structure.

In a similar vein, we would encourage the Secretariat to demonstrate its innovative quest to ensure geographical diversity in the Organisation. We do hope, the Secretariat would be able to launch pragmatic programmes like regular scholarships for interns and having funded Junior Professional Officer programmes from the developing countries to foster geographical diversity within the Organisation. We would request the Secretariat to include this under the International Cooperation and Assistance (ICA) programme, with rotation from each geographical group.

While we adopted the decision of re-hiring of inspectors in the last Executive Council meeting, my delegation notes with concern the number of resignation of staff from OPCW in the past few years. The reasons for the resignations need to be addressed and analysed duly in order to improve efficiency of OPCW's recruitment activities and to reduce the rehiring of staff after end of tenure.

Mr Chairperson, Bangladesh applauds the Scientific Advisory Board for its valued work. We note their contribution in advancing science and technology for the peaceful use of chemistry as a continuing process.

Full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI of the Convention is highly important. We note the ongoing efforts of the Secretariat in enhancing international cooperation and capacity-building activities towards economic and technological development and promotion of international cooperation for peaceful applications of chemistry. We would, however, urge the Secretariat to address all the issues that impedes full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI. At the same time, the States Parties need to continue supporting the Secretariat in its efforts to strengthen its activities in implementation of Article XI to accomplish 'shared development and prosperity'.

A culture of consensus and spirit of cooperation among all States Parties is crucial in our quest for non-proliferation and prevention of the use or re-emergence of chemical weapons. In the past, the OPCW Secretariat could maintain its non-political nature and thrive as a highly technical Organisation in safeguarding global peace and prosperity and the minimising threats of use of chemical weapons. Regrettably, we see increased politicisation of issues that are technical in nature. This impacts the conducive engagement in the OPCW that we could maintain up until recently. We would urge all States Parties and actors to uphold the provisions of the Convention and to remain apolitical under all circumstances. Any State Party can ill afford to see the OPCW getting further divided; and must re-energise the principle of solidarity and consensus for the greater cause.

Mr Chairperson, the upcoming years are crucial for both the Organisation and the State Parties. We step in to 2023 with the beginning of the post-destruction phase. We would need intense collaboration and partnerships embracing all the relevant regional and international organisations, chemical industry associations, scientific community, academia and CSOs, to raise our collective ambition and voice for the peaceful use of chemicals and to endeavour in a world free of chemical weapons.

I would request for this statement to be circulated as an official series document of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

I thank you.