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AZERBAIJAN

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBERS OF THE NON-ALIGNED
MOVEMENT THAT ARE STATES PARTIES TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS
CONVENTION AND CHINA DELIVERED BY MR GAYA MAMMADOV HEAD OF
DELEGATION OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-SEVENTH
SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China (the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China),

At the outset, we would like to welcome, H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela, Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa, as the Chairperson of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties and express our confidence in his leadership to steer this session of the Conference to a successful conclusion.

We also wish to take this opportunity to appreciate the Chairperson of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the State Parties, H.E. Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen, Permanent Representative of Norway. We wish to thank Director-General Fernando Arias for his comprehensive report. The Group conveys its appreciation to the OPCW staff for their dedication to the implementation of the Organisation's noble objectives.

In these challenging times of COVID-19 pandemic, the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China continue to underscore the importance for the OPCW and all States Parties to continue to ensure the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention ("the Convention") including the economic and technological development of the States Parties, especially in the fields of international cooperation and assistance.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China stress the importance of strict compliance with the Rules of Procedure of the OPCW and note the exceptional nature of the modalities adopted for the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties due to the challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic. In that sense, we express the importance of active participation by all States Parties in the work of the OPCW without any discrimination or technical obstacles and emphasise that such modalities should be regarded as exceptional,



not create any precedent for the future, and cease to be valid upon the termination of these special circumstances.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China recall the creation of a coordination mechanism to revitalise existing facilitations, and regret that no meeting of this mechanism was convened since then. We reiterate our call on the Chairperson of the Executive Council, in his role as head of this mechanism, to redouble efforts aimed at advancing the full and effective implementation of all provisions of the Convention in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner and to explore ways and means for the revitalisation of all facilitations, in line with the position paper of the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, dated 4 October 2019.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China attach great importance to the universality of the Convention and in this regard, strongly urge the non-parties to the Convention to ratify or accede to it without any further delay or preconditions, and emphasise that those non-parties should not derive any benefit therefrom.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China reiterate their long-standing principled position toward the achievement of general and complete disarmament, under strict and effective international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, we underline that the existence and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continue to pose a significant threat to international peace and security. We further underline that full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention contributes to regional and international peace and security.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China stress that the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as weapons anywhere by anyone and under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the provisions of the Convention and international law. We also reaffirm that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China condemn the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups. Deeply concerned about the use or threat of use by such groups, we request the Technical Secretariat to investigate, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, all reports on the use or threat of use of chemical weapons by such groups and keep the States Parties informed accordingly.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China express their deep concern regarding any attempt to accuse States Parties of using chemical weapons on the basis of unsubstantiated allegations made by media reports or any other open sources, including non-governmental entities. This trend can cause a dangerous precedent in the future work of the OPCW.

In this regard, the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China underline that the OPCW is the competent international Organisation to verify the compliance of States Parties with the provisions of the Convention, whose authority and credibility must be upheld at all times.

Noting with serious concern that the final extended deadline of 29 April 2012 for the destruction of chemical weapons was not met by certain possessor States Parties, the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China stress that the destruction of chemical weapons is the fundamental and top priority of the Organisation and urge the only remaining possessor State Party to expedite all necessary measures to ensure its compliance with the provisions of the Convention and relevant decisions of the policy-making organs (PMOs).

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China stress that the destruction of old chemical weapons and abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) should be completed in the shortest possible time in accordance with the Convention and relevant decisions adopted by the PMOs.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China stress that further efforts should be made to complete destruction of chemical weapons on the territory of China, abandoned by Japan, as soon as possible and to address challenges including ensuring the safety of people and protecting the environment in accordance with the Convention and the Executive Council decision (EC-67/DEC.6) as amended by the Council at its 101st Session, according to the decision “Destruction Plan beyond the Year 2022 for the Chemical Weapons Abandoned by Japan in the People’s Republic of China (EC-101/DEC.2) dated 4 October 2022. The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China welcome the adoption of the new destruction plan and look forward to its comprehensive, complete and faithful implementation.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China welcome the virtual visit by the Chairperson of the Executive Council, the Director-General, representatives of the Executive Council, as well as States Parties as observers to the Haerbaling ACW destruction site in Jilin Province, People’s Republic of China on 15 September 2022. We note with satisfaction that China, Japan and the Technical Secretariat have reached an agreement on conducting remote ACW verification as an exceptional and provisional arrangement due to the pandemic situation and the first such verification has taken place on 31 October 2022. We also look forward to the resumption of the on-site visit and verification by the OPCW when the situation allows.

Recalling the decisions of the Executive Council with respect to the elimination and destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons, and the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons production facilities, the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China welcome the substantive efforts made and progress achieved in this regard. We welcome the Director-General’s reports on the completion of the destruction of all chemical weapons and chemical weapon production facilities, declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. We look forward to the continuation of successful cooperation existing between the OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic on all issues.

We take note of the work done so far by the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and look forward to receiving its reports on its ongoing activities. We expect the approach followed by the FFM teams would be uniform and consistent.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China reaffirm that Article XI deals with one of the core objectives of the Convention and is essential for the realisation of the object and purpose of the Convention. We attach great importance to the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of this Article in a manner which avoids hampering the economic or technological development of States Parties, and international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under this Convention, including the international exchange of scientific and technical information and

chemicals and equipment for the production, processing or use of chemicals for purposes not prohibited under this Convention. We also emphasise the need to strengthen and expedite efforts in the economic and technological development of the States Parties.

We also underline the importance of the promotion of international cooperation for the benefit of States Parties through the transfer of technology, material and equipment for peaceful purposes in the field of chemistry and removal of any discriminatory restrictions such as unilateral coercive measures against other States Parties that are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Convention, affect the Convention's long term viability, and have an adverse impact on the existing level of trust among the States Parties.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China recognise that the annual review and evaluation workshop for the components of an agreed framework for the implementation of Article XI is a useful platform to develop concrete measures and recommendations to ensure the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of this Article. In this regard, we request the Article XI facilitator to report on the ideas that have emerged from workshops and other relevant activities held during the intersessional period, to be reflected in the report of the PMOs. We also request the Secretariat to provide a comprehensive report on the gaps and challenges on the effective implementation of decision C-16/DEC.10, dated 1 December 2011 which is still applicable.

We appreciate the efforts made so far by the Article XI facilitator and encourage the continuation of inclusive outreach and constructive dialogue with all States Parties. We note with appreciation that the drafting committee has completed its work to streamline the list of ideas that emerged from the above-mentioned review and evaluation workshops, and we look forward for fruitful discussions in ongoing Article XI facilitations.

We reiterate that a comprehensive discussion in the PMOs on the implementation of the decision C-16/DEC.10, dated 1 December 2011 is the effective way to formulate an OPCW strategy for the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI. In this regard, we strongly call on all States Parties and the Technical Secretariat to take into consideration also the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China proposals (C-12/NAT.1, dated 6 November 2007) on the implementation of Article XI of the Convention, including the 'Plan of Action'.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China emphasise the imperative of the PMOs of the OPCW to preserve permanently and allocate substantial financial, technical and human resources in the realisation of international cooperation activities in States Parties in the developing countries, considering national and regional needs, realities and challenges, including language barriers. We note that the challenges have been accentuated due to the COVID-19 pandemic since 2020.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China have taken note of the Note by the Director-General (C-27/DG.03 dated 20 June 2022) which outlines the transfer of funds between programmes and within sub-programmes during 2021. We express deep concern that considerable amounts of EUR 2,080,288 have been transferred out of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division (ICA) Programme since 2015, including EUR 60,338 in 2021. The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China wish to re-emphasise that the ICA is one of the core pillars of the Convention, and it is essential that a balanced approach towards allocation of funds to all programmes, including in particular ICA to be pursued by the Technical Secretariat so that the implementation of this programme be sustained.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China welcome the recommendation made by the decision on biennial Draft Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2022-2023 adopted by the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, which called upon the Technical Secretariat and States Parties to work collectively with a view to achieving the full and effective implementation of the ICA programmes, by ensuring that the relevant OPCW's budgetary requirements are effectively balanced and programmes delivery are promptly executed in particular for developing countries, in order to avoid or to reduce the need for transfers between major programmes, including consideration of the retention of unspent funds for ICA in a special fund. We look forward to the full implementation of the above recommendation and remain ready to engage in any further consultations on this matter.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China welcome the results and achievements made under the fifth phase of the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa, despite the public health challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The State Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China further welcome the meetings of the steering committee of the Africa Programme on 24 June and 15 November 2022. We note the ongoing consultations concerning the conception of the sixth phase of the Africa Programme, including during the twenty-fourth annual meeting of the National Authorities held from 22 to 25 November 2022 and look forward to the launch of the sixth phase of the Programme. To guarantee its sustainability, the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China support the importance of funding future phases of this Programme under the regular budget of the OPCW.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China support the upgrading of the current OPCW Laboratory to an OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre) to strengthen science and technology capabilities of the Technical Secretariat in responding to the objects and purposes of the Convention, as well as to support capacity building in the States Parties in full conformity with its mandate. We welcome the steady progress of this Centre and urge that its modalities, mandate operational needs, and budgetary cost-benefit analysis should be considered and adopted by the PMOs. We also stress the importance of transparency and efficiency in the establishment, as well as the future work and programmes of the Centre. The ChemTech Centre should contribute towards further development of capabilities of the States Parties.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China wish to underscore the importance of obtaining designated laboratories in all regions and encourage the OPCW to continue its capacity building efforts towards this objective.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China stress the need for all States Parties to fully implement their obligations under Article X. We urge States Parties and in particular those in a position to do so, to contribute to the voluntary fund for assistance to ensure the ability of the Technical Secretariat to develop a state of readiness to provide timely, adequate, and effective assistance to respond to the increasing demand of States Parties.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China pay profound respect to victims of chemical weapons and their families, and in light of the decision adopted by the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties (C-16/DEC.13, dated 2 December 2011), appreciate the States Parties for their contribution to the trust fund for the international support network for victims of chemical weapons and urge all the States Parties to actively contribute to the trust fund. We underline that insufficient contribution to the voluntary fund for assistance

will considerably limit the capacity of the OPCW to provide the essential medicines and necessary medical assistance to the victims of chemical weapons.

Recalling the “International Symposium on Medical Treatment of Chemical Warfare Victims: Challenges and Hopes”, which took place on 28-29 June 2018, in the Hague, the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China request to hold such symposiums regularly in order to establish an international network composed of scientists, clinicians, experts, academia and civil society with the aim to evaluate the short and long-term effects of chemical weapons on victims and make recommendations accordingly. We also call upon the Director-General to encourage the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) to further discuss the symposium’s objectives, and integrate assistance for the victims of chemical weapons into the programmes and activities of the ChemTech Centre.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China would like to draw CSP’s attention to the continuing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, the vulnerability of the chemical weapon’s victims to COVID-19 requires specific and urgent assistance of all States Parties in particular the developed countries. Furthermore, the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China underline that taking into account specific situations of the victims of chemical weapons and the need to help to alleviate adverse impact of COVID-19 on the victims of chemical weapons, the Scientific Advisory Board could play an important role in this regard.

Furthermore, the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China call upon the OPCW Technical Secretariat to explore mechanisms including cooperation with the WHO to contribute to assisting the victims of chemical weapons.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China underline the responsibility of the States Parties and Technical Secretariat of the OPCW to assist the victims of chemical weapons and to coordinate and deliver to them the needed equipment, materials and medicines, in accordance with Article X. We are of the view that any restrictions, including unilateral measures, imposed by some States Parties against other States Parties, which impede assistance to the victims of chemical weapons, are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Convention.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China urge States Parties to take concrete measures including, inter alia by providing materials and equipment-related assistance available to those States Parties which are in need, without any restriction. In this regard, we welcome the efforts by the Director-General for his good offices to facilitate assistance to the victims of chemical weapons. In order to reach a positive outcome on this matter, we encourage the Director-General to continue and intensify his efforts and inform the Conference of the States Parties about the latest developments on the subject.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China encourage States Parties and the Technical Secretariat to continue providing appropriate, effective and tailor-made technical assistance and support to States Parties in enhancing their national capacities and in carrying out their national implementation measures in the context of Article VII and provide the necessary financial support to do so. We firmly believe that Article VII obligations necessitate full and effective measures by all States Parties to implement all provisions of the Convention and encourage them to continue working towards this end.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China reiterate that the recruitment of personnel in the Technical Secretariat must be fair, transparent and must ensure equitable geographic distribution, as mandated by Article VIII, paragraph 44, of the Convention, and gender balance at all professional levels of the Organisation. We emphasise that any amendment to the tenure policy shall not change the non-career nature of this Organisation. Furthermore, we call upon the Secretariat to devise as soon as possible appropriate modalities of a funded internship and Junior Professional Officer programme, which will enable candidates from developing States Parties, to have equitable access to professional positions in the Technical Secretariat.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China urge the Technical Secretariat and States Parties to embody in the organisational governance, required policy, programmes and structural necessities to contribute to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Convention in particular Article X and XI, while preserving the OPCW's experiences, expertise and organisational governance on the destruction/elimination of chemical weapons and to further strengthen the Convention in its entirety, taking into account the Convention as a unique multilateral negotiated disarmament instrument and ensuring the OPCW relevance.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China take note with appreciation the continuing efforts to promote gender equity within the OPCW and call for enhanced cooperation to promote the role of women and girls in the peaceful use of chemistry. In this regard, we welcome the organisation of an online symposium on women in chemistry held on 1 July 2021 and look forward to the continuation of efforts to engage and represent women to promote the full and effective implementation of the Convention.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China reiterate that the discussions on the draft decision on the OPCW Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters Rules of Procedure (ABAF) should be conducted in an open and inclusive manner, while preserving its independence and avoiding issues that may lead to its politicisation and polarisation. Bearing in mind that the ABAF is an open-ended body without decision-making powers, the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China hold the view that every State Party has the right to nominate experts it deems qualified and appropriate as a member of the ABAF. We consider that broad geographical distribution and composition of experts with diversified backgrounds will benefit the functioning of the ABAF.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China call for efforts to address the issue of aerosolised use of central nervous system-acting chemicals (CNS-acting chemicals) for law-enforcement purposes that was adopted by vote at the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties through dialogue and consensus, which is important, in a comprehensive and constructive manner, to be considered in accordance with the Convention.

We note the ongoing consultations of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) for the Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference to be held in May 2023. We emphasise the importance of the OEWG and encourage its close cooperation with all States Parties and regional groups to make all efforts to achieve consensus.

In conclusion Mr Chairperson, the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China encourage States Parties to work in the spirit of goodwill and cooperation for the successful conclusion of this session. We reiterate that the practice of consensus-based decision-making

by the PMOs is the right approach for achieving the object and purpose of the Convention. We urge all States Parties to neither polarise nor politicise the work of the Organisation. We further reaffirm the centrality of the PMOs in the evaluation and implementation of all issues related to the Convention, in accordance with their respective mandates.

Thank you.

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