



OPCW

Review Conference

Fifth Session
15 – 19 May 2023

RC-5/NAT.55
15 May 2023
ARABIC and ENGLISH only

IRAQ

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ TO THE
OPCW AT THE FIFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE
STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE CHEMICAL
WEAPONS CONVENTION**

Mr Chairperson of the Conference,
Mr Director-General of the OPCW,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me and my country's delegation to the Conference pleasure to congratulate you on your election as Chairperson of the Fifth Review Conference of the OPCW, and to congratulate the Vice-Chairpersons. We are fully confident that your outstanding diplomatic expertise will lead to the success of the Conference. We also reiterate our support for Mr Fernando Arias Gonzales, the Director-General of the OPCW, for the great efforts he has been making since he took office. We affirm our full readiness to cooperate with him to ensure a successful conclusion of the current session and all activities of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW and to iron out difficulties in order to bring closer together views that would lead us to the adoption of successful decisions, thereby promoting international peace and security.

Iraq aligns itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Rahman Mustafayev, 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. The Republic of Iraq appreciates the efforts made by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Estonia, H.E. Ambassador Lauri Kuusing, Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference, in preparing the final text of the Conference, in addition to his close cooperation with all States Parties with the aim of reaching a consensual outcome of this Conference.

We take the opportunity offered by this Conference to affirm our belief that the OPCW is the tool that has proven its efficiency in verifying strict measures related to security and safety from chemical weapons and related materials that still exist on the face of the earth. Therefore, the government of Iraq has always been in favour of any international effort that seeks to prevent the use of chemical weapons by anyone. Iraq will continue to support all proposals that seek to add chemicals (for non-peaceful uses) to the substances prohibited under the Convention, as we believe in the need to support any proposal that would achieve a world free of chemical weapons. At the same time, Iraq encourages the use of chemicals for peaceful purposes (including medical, agricultural, and other fields for the benefit of all). Also, Iraq believes that achieving the universality of the Convention as soon as possible is the only framework through which it is possible to create a world free of chemical weapons and



completely eliminate their danger. Therefore, my country's government renews its call on countries that have not yet done so to join the Convention as soon as possible and subject their relevant facilities and sites to the control of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW.

The delegation of the Republic of Iraq also expresses its deep concern over the recent use of toxic chemicals and strongly condemns any use of such chemicals, anywhere. We recall that Iraq suffered from the use of chemical weapons during previous wars, the latest being the war on the Daesh terrorist gangs, which targeted civilians and security forces, causing more than 2,500 casualties. We therefore remind the OPCW and the States Parties to help provide chemical weapons victims with medical support and treatment and to provide Iraqi institutions with technical and logistical support. Iraq is working continuously through its institutions and in cooperation with friends from the international community to prevent any chemical threat to its citizens and those of other States.

Iraq stresses the need for recruitment at the Technical Secretariat to be made in accordance with paragraph 44 of Article VIII of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which states that due regard should be given to equitable geographical representation and gender equality. Therefore, we consider it necessary to find more effective ways to achieve this goal, especially as the Republic of Iraq, since its accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention, has never had the chance to be represented in the body of OPCW staff members, despite the many requests made by the Iraqi Representation.

Iraq affirms its firm position that the work of the OPCW should be distanced from any politicisation and that its character as a purely technical organisation should be preserved. Also, Iraq believes firmly that we all have a responsibility to implement the conventions and treaties on the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, and that we should all restore the principle of consensus within the Organisation and constructive cooperation to achieve its objectives.

In conclusion, I reaffirm the commitment of the Government of the Republic of Iraq and its full keenness on the success of the work and activities of this Organisation and affirm its pivotal role in the complete elimination of chemical weapons, stressing our relentless endeavour to overcome difficulties and bring points of view closer in order to reach effective results and decisions that contribute to achieving the goal of full elimination of chemical weapons.

I request that this statement be considered an official document of the Conference and posted on the OPCW's public website.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

--- 0 ---