

Statement by

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In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to begin by congratulating you on your well-deserved election as the Chairman of the Conference.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Director General, Ladies and Gentlemen,

For millenniums, millions of people, military and civilians alike, have fallen victim to the means of warfare. To avert human losses, attempts have been made to address the causes of war and prepare for the conditions of peace, through, inter-alia disarmament agreements. The records of such undertakings are rather mixed. In some areas achievements are notable, while in some other areas the international community is yet to forge a common understanding and consensus on divergent issues, that is mainly due to double standard and self interest seeking by certain powers.

It gives me a great pleasure, as the Foreign Minister of the last victim of chemical weapons, to address the 11th Conference of States Parties of the Chemical Weapons Convention. In its invasion of Iran, the former regime of Iraq resorted to chemical weapons. Military personnel and civilians were targeted. Thousands of our citizens either lost their lives or suffered chemical injuries. There is no single month going without the demise of some of these victims. The situation of chemical injured persons, experiencing a gradual painful death, is abhorring. Many families, round the clock, cater to the special needs of these people. They face, at the same time, the emotional pressure of the victims' gradual death. On top of all these, one might add the trauma the children of the victims are going through. This situation has also imposed a financial and logistical burden on the Government in terms of providing necessary services to over 60,000 chemical injured persons.

We are not able to make up for those victims who have passed away, but could help alleviate the human suffering of the survivors of chemical weapons. To this end, I submit the establishment of a support network to mobilize international care,

addressing their special needs. I have instructed the Iranian delegation to the OPCW, in preparation for the Second Review Conference, to advance this submission and to confer with other delegations thereon.

The use of chemical weapons, we firmly believe, must not happen again. The perpetrators of such crimes should not enjoy impunity. Suppliers of these inhumane weapons to Saddam's regime must be brought to justice. We urge those states whose nationals or companies were involved in supply of such material and equipment to former Iraqi regime to take the necessary measures against them. This would send a strong message that crimes could not go unpunished. In this respect, the exertions of the Government of the Netherlands and its justice system to prosecute a Dutch national who was involved in transfer of chemical agents to Sadam Hossein's regime are laudable. I should note that 400 European and American companies have provided Sadame's regime with chemical agents, equipment and technology for chemical weapons.

However, it is heartening to note that the aspiration instilled in this very city in 1899 by an international peace conference to ban the use of projectiles filled with poison gas has culminated in the Convention on Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, as well as creation of the OPCW. The CWC, in our view, sets a successful example. It indicates that seemingly far-reaching objectives are attainable should the political will and determination exist.

The CWC is equally a unique comprehensive multilateral agreement banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. It pushes multilateralism beyond the often narrowly perceived power politics. It is non-discriminatory. It does not create a category of haves and have nots. It is a truly non-proliferation and disarmament treaty in that it has designed a time-bound destruction program. And, it is simultaneously to promote international cooperation in the field of chemical technology.

Time and efforts put in gradual development of the OPCW are commendable. I am touched by the spirit of understanding, consensus building and cooperation among the Organization and the State Parties. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the States Parties, Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter, the Director General, and his colleagues in the Technical Secretariat for their accomplishment.

However, there is no room for complacency. We have a long road ahead. Today, problems are becoming of global nature. Global environment, weapons of mass

destruction, Aids epidemic etc requires global responses and participation. For this, we should uphold the principle of one state, one vote of the UN charter.

Destruction of chemical weapons is and remains the most fundamental bedrock of the Convention. This obligation forms the very basic security balance devised in the Convention. Therefore, the success and credibility of the Convention would be judged by realization of the destruction. We are alarmed at the slow pace of destruction vis-à-vis the expected timetable. While the Convention foresees, in exceptional cases, a minimum extension for destruction of chemical weapons, at most by 2012, it has stressed, as a rule, that this obligation should be implemented not later than 10 years after entry into force of the Convention. If the major possessors would not meet the deadline as in the case with Kyoto Protocol, what should be done?

Approaching the deadline, there is the need for acceleration of destruction process. We urge all possessor states, in particular the major possessors, to spare no efforts to meet the deadlines set forth by the Convention for completion of their chemical weapons destruction. These exertions, in this regard, might include allocation of additional resources, removal of national and administrative constraints and development of more speedy methods of destruction. One has to remind that any failure to meet this fundamental obligation would constitute violation of the Convention. Does the UN Security Council is able to address this violation?

The non-possessor States Parties also have a role to play. They should remain vigilant and closely monitor the implementation of the obligations of the possessors. In this respect, the Second Review Conference in 2008 would provide a propitious opportunity to review further destruction progress.

Iran has a high record of accession to non-proliferation and disarmament treaties and conventions. It is a party to Biological Weapons Convention, Chemical Weapons Convention and the NPT. By acceding to Chemical Weapons Convention, the States Parties have foregone the possession of such weapons. Iran has proved its commitment to non- proliferation by refraining from retaliation against the wide spread use of chemical weapons by Iraq during its 8 year invasion of Iran. There has been a considerable increase in the number of CWC States Parties. However, I should argue that without universality of CWC the States Parties are not protected against any possible chemical attack by a non state party. This is more critical in the Middle East region where the Convention falls short of full accession. The Middle East is one of the very few regions in which chemical weapons have been used in warfare since the Second World War. Full accession and elimination of chemical weapons in the

Middle East will prevent the possibility of their use, thus enhancing the regional security.

Cognizant of the significance of universality of the Convention for international peace and security, the Islamic Republic of Iran advocates a new momentum to bolster the efforts of the Technical Secretariat and in particular the OPCW Director General in this area. The single most dangerous case is Zionist entity. This regime with its weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and nuclear weapons, is the most dangerous threat against regional and international peace and security.

All the articles of the Convention are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Article XI of the Convention on international cooperation has served as an incentive for accession thereto. Based on this assumption, it has been established that the Convention shall not hamper the economic and technological development of the States Parties and shall promote chemical trade among States Parties for peaceful purposes. Regrettably, the provisions of this article are yet to be fully implemented. The Article has been, for long, treated as a secondary feature of the Convention. An essential element for the full implementation of the Convention is promotion of free trade in the field of peaceful uses of chemistry. Application of any ad-hoc and arbitrary restrictions to exchange of technology, material and equipment for peaceful purposes between the CWC States Parties runs counter to the spirit and letter of the Convention and is, therefore, unlawful and tries to create a scientific and technological apartheid. The export control regimes shall be brought in line with the provisions of the Convention.

The 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention is a high time for celebration. It is also an occasion for renewal of the commitment to disarmament within a non-discriminatory and multilateral framework. During the last several decades some have tried to redefine the international non-proliferation and disarmament treaties to their own liking. They present themselves as the voice of the international community and guardians of these norms. Likewise, they perceive themselves above the international law and ignore their own obligations. Some even go that far to unilaterally abrogate disarmament treaties or obstruct the conclusion of several years of international negotiations, since these no longer suit their interests. Unilateralism, selectivity, discrimination, and circumvention of the international obligations would certainly undermine the credibility and integrity of the international non-proliferation and disarmament treaties.

The Islamic Republic of Iran maintains that international treaties are composed of sets of obligations and rights. All parties, regardless of their size, population and power,

are equal in terms of their obligations and rights. No single state or group of states is above the law. All states parties to a treaty should abide by their obligations and enjoy their rights. That is why we constantly insist on our right to develop nuclear enrichment capability.

During the first ten years, the Organization has mainly focused on elaboration and development of its institutional capacity, including its verification regime. As we drive forward, there is the need to intensify our efforts towards full implementation of the provisions of the Convention, ensuring universality and meeting the destruction deadline.

With the objectives of peace and justice for all, let us build on our achievement in OPCW and work hand in hand to rid the world of the scourges of weapons of mass destruction. Let us do away with selfishness, imposition and war. Let us make this world a safer place for the present and future generations.

I thank you Mr. Chairman and wish you every success in your deliberations.