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ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

**STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER FOR LEGAL AND
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN,
H.E. SEYED MOHAMMAD ALI HOSSEINI, BEFORE THE THIRTEENTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE
CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION
2 DECEMBER 2008, THE HAGUE**

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your election to the Chairmanship of the Conference of the States Parties and wish you every success. Let me assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in steering this Conference to a successful conclusion. I would also like to express my thanks to the Director-General, Ambassador Rogelio Pflirter and his staff for their tireless efforts and wish them every success. My sincere thanks also go to Ambassador Tamova of Slovakia for her great contribution to the work of the Executive Council during her tenure.

Mr Chairman,

Please let me associate myself with the statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Reyes of Cuba on behalf of NAM CWC States Parties and China.

The Islamic Republic of Iran's high record of accession to disarmament instruments is exemplary. Iran is among the original members of all WMD treaties, as well as a signatory to many other international disarmament instruments.

As the last victim of chemical weapons, the Islamic Republic of Iran strongly believes that promoting international peace and security is subject to the realisation of a world free from threat and existence of weapons of mass destruction.

We have converged on the OPCW to highlight the importance of the CWC in promoting international peace and security. The Convention has indeed enshrined at least three decades



of sincere desire of international community to eliminate an entire category of weapons of mass destruction.

One day, it was a far-fetched idea to have an agreement on effective measures for the prohibition of development, production, stockpiling and destruction of chemical weapons. We have worked very hard for decades to achieve this valuable document. Now this important instrument is in our possession. This achievement increases our responsibility to our children and future generations to act in a coherent manner and intensify our collective efforts to achieve the lofty goal of a world free from the horrors of chemical weapons.

Mr Chairman,

The CWC is distinct from other disarmament instruments due to the following:

- Not dividing its States Parties into the privileged and the unprivileged or into haves and have-nots;
- Requiring a total ban on an entire category of weapons of mass destruction;
- Having a unique verification system which provides assurance of compliance through various types of inspections;
- Providing assistance and protection to its Member States against use or threat of use of chemical weapons;
- Promoting international cooperation on economic and technological development of the States Parties, inter alia, removing all restrictions among themselves in exchange of equipment, material and technology for peaceful purposes

It is commendable that we have managed to conclude a very fundamental instrument which outlaws a deadly weapon which has caused numerous casualties in the past, the vestiges of which are still lingering. However, we should not be oblivious of the fact that the objectives of the Convention are yet to be realised.

Our task has not yet been fulfilled; indeed many things are yet to be done. Some of these issues are of vital importance to the preservation of the integrity of the Convention; we shall not allow any erosion of the provision of the Convention which would jeopardise our achievements.

We agreed in the Second Review Conference that the destruction of chemical weapons is essential for the realisation of the object and purpose of the Convention. Therefore, our focus of attention should be on destruction of chemical weapons, continued existence of which threatens the security of mankind.

The characteristics of the Convention that I just enumerated, in fact constitute the pillars of the Convention. Therefore, it is worth evaluating whether since the EIF of the Convention our objectives towards strengthening these pillars have been realised or not.

Mr Chairman,

Complete and verifiable destruction of chemical weapons and the chemical weapons production facilities is the most fundamental objective of the CWC, which is yet to be achieved. Regrettably, the original deadline, 29 April 2007, set by the Convention for

completion of the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles was missed. We welcome the fulfilment of the obligations of some possessor States Parties within the final deadlines for completion of the destruction of their chemical stockpiles within the final deadlines as extended by the Eleventh Conference of States Parties.

However, bearing in mind that the final extended deadlines are approaching fast and more than 58% of chemical weapons stockpiles are yet to be destroyed.

The existence of these chemical stockpiles can be potentially viewed as a threat to international security particularly if they by any chance fall into the hands of terrorists. I would like to reiterate that as EC 54 dealt with the matter and emphasised the timely commencement of destruction activities is very important for the fulfilment of obligations by possessor States Parties, the EC must continue to closely monitor the progress in the destruction programmes of possessor States Parties and provide necessary recommendations to ensure their compliance with the Convention. We think it is not far-fetched. As the saying goes, when there is a will there is a way.

Let me now turn to the important issue of international cooperation, which has been constantly highlighted by the NAM CWC States Parties and China, and underlined by the Second Review Conference. We shall not forget that a delicate balance has to be struck between the obligations and rights of the States Parties for promoting the object and purpose of the Convention.

However, after the passage of eleven years from the operation of the Convention, it is a matter of serious concern that the rights of many developing States Parties under Article XI of the Convention to have access to chemical material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes have been systematically denied by certain arbitrary export control regimes. Such an approach has questioned the reliable mechanisms established under the Convention to verify compliance of the States Parties. Furthermore, it has caused confidence deficit among the States Parties.

We shall not allow such things to divide the States Parties. We have agreed to stay within the purview of the Convention to promote our common objectives. To achieve these objectives we shall work hard to ensure that the rights of the States Parties versus their responsibilities would be fully respected. Now it is time to devise appropriate mechanisms and draw up a roadmap for the full implementation of Article XI.

Mr Chairman,

On protection and assistance against the use or threat of use of chemical weapons, the Second Review Conference noted the importance of achieving and maintaining a high degree of readiness of the Secretariat, as well as the States Parties, with respect to the timely and requisite assistance and protection against the use or threat of use of chemical weapons, and asked for developing measures for emergency assistance to victims of the use of chemical weapons. In this context, our proposal put forward at the Eleventh Conference of the States Parties on the establishment of the "Chemical Weapons Victim's International Funding & Assistance Network" provides a framework for cooperation among the States Parties with regard to the provision of assistance to the victims of chemical weapons as envisaged by Article X of the Convention.

Mr Chairman,

We express our warm welcome to Lebanon, the Congo and Guinea-Bissau for their accession to the Convention and assure them of our full cooperation and assistance in implementing the Convention.

In our view, the universality of the Convention is of utmost importance as it has been reiterated by the Second Review Conference. In this regard, special attention should be paid to the Middle East region, in particular to the situation of the Zionist regime's chemical weapons programme and capability and its accession to all international disarmament instruments.

This regime with its weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and nuclear weapons, is the most dangerous threat to regional and international peace and security. It has to be remembered that Middle East is one of the very few regions in which chemical weapons have been used since the First World War.

Non-accession of this regime to international WMD treaties and its clandestine programmes have practically jeopardised the lofty goal of the Middle East free from WMD and has become the most serious challenge to the universality of the Convention, which is essential for the realisation of the object and purpose of the Convention.

Mr Chairman,

Having the largest number of victims of chemical weapons in the world has strengthened our policy vis-à-vis all kinds of weapons of mass destruction, in particular chemical weapons. The commitment of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Chemical Weapons Convention goes far beyond that of a merely legal undertaking. It stems from a bitter national experience of having more than 100,000 casualties victimised by chemical attacks in the aggression of the regime of Saddam Hussein against Iran.

In order to prevent the recurrence of such tragedies, as witnessed in the aggression of Saddam Hussein against Iran, 1980–88, and to promote international peace and security, those criminals who assisted Saddam in the development and use of such deadly weapons must be brought to justice.

The perpetrators of such heinous crimes should not enjoy impunity. It is highly expected that all those countries whose companies or citizens had been involved in such crimes abide by their legal and moral responsibilities and put such perpetrators on trial.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has shared its invaluable experience in the field of medical treatment of these victims of chemical weapons with the OPCW and its States Parties. So far with the cooperation of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW, we have organised nine international medical courses in Tehran with the participation of physicians from a large number of CWC States Parties.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion,

It seems to my delegation that the success of this Organisation is deeply rooted in the following: adherence to the principles of this august body, compliance with a multilateral

approach, strict observance of transparency, as well as close coordination between the TS as the executive body of the Organisation and the States Parties.

Last but not least, it would be quite appropriate that the Technical Secretariat continue with an all-inclusive approach by seriously taking into account the views of all interested delegations in preparing the TS substantive documents relevant to the implementation of the Convention. It is crystal clear that any deviation from the above-mentioned principles can be quite detrimental to this successful process, which is highly recommended to be avoided. However, we are highly hopeful that by observing the already enunciated principles, we will as always witness the continued success of this Organisation.

Thank You

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