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ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR MOHAMMAD MAHDI AKHONDZADEH
DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER FOR LEGAL AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
AT THE FIFTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES**

Mr Chairperson,
Distinguished Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Please allow me to begin by congratulating Your Excellency, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Guatemala, Mr Julio Roberto Palomo Silva on your well-deserved election as the Chairperson of this important Conference. I am confident that under your able leadership, this Conference will be steered to a successful conclusion. I wish you every success. I also wish to express our appreciation to the former Chairperson for his efforts during his tenure to which we owe the success of last year's Conference.

My congratulations also go to Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, on his election as the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and wish him every success in turning this prominent Organisation into an excellent example of success among international organisations particularly in the field of disarmament.

I am deeply honoured to address this august body at the Fifteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

I also wish to associate my delegation with the policy statement delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of Cuba on behalf of NAM CWC States Parties and China.

Mr Chairperson,

Recent developments in the international arena mark sea changes in international relations and politics. Collapse of unilateralism and policies based on military power, as well as coercive diplomacy and arrogant attitude in relations between States by domination-seeking powers and emergence of a new world order and new actors, have paved the way for the discourse of logic, justice, wisdom and human thoughts and culture to prevail.

It has now become common understanding that the unfair and inefficient global management has come to its end point and that it requires a fundamental reassessment. Reorganising the



world's affairs and ensuring stability and prosperity requires participation of all and a divine management. The international community can no longer tolerate the logic of force, domination, unilateralism, war and humiliation.

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons since its inception has been an exemplary multilateral forum based on the Chemical Weapons Convention, as a unique international instrument in which all States Parties enjoy equal rights. All the efforts aimed at progress and gradual development of this Organisation are commendable.

The marathon negotiations, during which the Convention was concluded, were inspired by the horrible memories of the international community of the use of different types of chemical weapons by the Saddam government against both the Iranian civilian population and servicemen.

The international community is well aware that the active participation of the Islamic Republic of Iran in international negotiations for formulating the Convention was rooted in a very bitter experience in our recent history.

These all-out inhuman attacks resulted in about 100,000 chemical casualties and martyrs. Just in the case of Sardasht, a small city in northwestern Iran, as a result of deployment of heavy chemical weapons by the Saddam government, large numbers of civilians, including women and children, were chemically killed or wounded. Deployment of chemical weapons against Sardasht was the first documented large-scale chemical attack against a residential area in the world.

Major powers, in particular, the United States and a large number of European countries even rewarded Saddam with provision of more advanced military hardware and technologies for production and deployment of different types of chemical weapons. To ensure that chemical weapons shall not be produced and used ever again, the providers should be exposed to the international community for being held accountable for assisting the Saddam government to commit such heinous crimes.

Mr Chairperson,

The recent decision adopted by the Executive Council to annually commemorate the victims of chemical weapons through public statements to be issued by the distinguished Director-General on the anniversary of the chemical tragedy of Sardasht is a positive and praiseworthy step. The international community is expected to express its sympathy with the victims of chemical weapons and their families thereby healing some of their appalling sufferings.

It was in the very same context that the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Mr Manouchehr Mottaki, tabled a proposal on the establishment of an international support network for the victims of chemical weapons at the Eleventh Session of the Conference, which is currently under discussion in the consultations of the Executive Council on Article X of the Convention.

To further elaborate our views on this issue, a national paper will be circulated to this Conference by my delegation. I encourage your serious attention to the need for actualisation

of such an important humanitarian arrangement, which would be a great achievement for the OPCW, enhancing its role and functioning at the international level.

Mr Chairperson,

Completion of destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles within the timeline set by the Convention constitutes the *raison d'être* of the Convention. The credibility of the Convention will be in jeopardy if compliance with the final extended deadline is not met. The recent alarming indications by both major possessor States, namely, the United States and the Russian Federation, that they may not meet the final extended deadline (29 April 2012) to complete the destruction of their chemical weapons stockpiles, has become a source of serious concern.

The possessor States Parties are genuinely committed to the destruction of their chemical weapons stockpiles within the deadline set by the Convention. This commitment is not just a theoretical obligation. We urge all possessor States Parties, in particular the United States and the Russian Federation, to comply with their obligations and make every effort necessary to meet the final extended deadline.

Any breach of the provisions of the Convention will undermine the trust among States Parties and that non-compliance with the cut-off date of destruction can in no way whatsoever be justifiable.

We are confident that by allocation of required funds, good will and strong determination, the United States and the Russian Federation will be capable of accelerating their destruction operations as appropriate to meet the final extended deadline. As the saying goes, if there is a will, there is a way.

Mr Chairperson,

The invasion of Iraq by the United States and the United Kingdom troops and their allies in March 2003 and occupation of this country was claimed to be for deterring the threat posed to international peace and security by the existing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Though, after the occupation of Iraq no information was ever released on the discovery of WMDs in Iraq by the occupying forces, quite surprisingly, in April 2009 (six years later), the United States and the United Kingdom claimed that they had discovered and destroyed some chemical weapons during their invasion of Iraq without informing the OPCW.

Refraining from declaring the discovered chemical weapons in Iraq and subsequently destroying them, without complying with the provisions set forth in the Convention, on the pretext of being concerned about possible access of terrorist groups to the information or weapons is neither justifiable nor acceptable. Even safety and security considerations shall not provide any excuse to any country for ignoring its obligations under the Convention.

The hasty and unilateral actions by the United States and United Kingdom, in contradiction with the Convention, and failure to notify the OPCW and States Parties in accordance with the provisions envisaged in the Convention, raise serious questions and concerns about this issue. Since the unilateral actions by the United States and the United Kingdom have been in violation of the Convention, it requires that the matter be seriously looked into by the OPCW.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been seeking clarifications from both countries in accordance with Article IX of the Convention. However, the answers received are not convincing and even more ambiguity arises surrounding the issue as the concerns persist about the non-compliance that had occurred. Therefore, after taking into account the answers provided by the United States and the United Kingdom, we will take appropriate measures within the framework of the Convention to address the relevant growing concerns. The other members of the Coalition of the Willing that are party to the Convention should also be held accountable for their actions.

Mr Chairperson,

Given the importance attached to universal adherence to the Convention and its contribution to international peace and security, the Islamic Republic of Iran advocates a new momentum for the OPCW to intensify its efforts in particular by our new Director-General in this area. This is more indispensable to the sensitive region of the Middle East in which the most dangerous case is the Zionist entity with its clandestine programme to develop all kinds of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. The international community, particularly powerful States Parties, should exert pressure on the Zionist regime to accede to the Convention without further delay and put its facilities under the OPCW verification regime.

It is regrettable that as the annual reports released by the OPCW indicate, in the transfer of Schedule 3 as well as Schedule 2 chemicals to non-Parties, large quantities of chemicals of Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 have been transferred to the Zionist regime. On the other hand, in spite of provisions of Articles VI and XI, some States Parties have put in place certain arbitrary and discriminatory extra-Conventional restrictions on transferring chemicals, equipment and related technologies for peaceful purposes among States Parties whose chemical industries are under constant verification by the OPCW. Application of such double standards is in violation of the Convention and undermines the integrity and credibility of the Convention.

In light of implementation of Article XI of the Convention, the Islamic Republic of Iran with its recent technological advances in chemical industry expresses its readiness to engage in the fullest possible exchange of its experiences in chemistry and transfer of chemicals with the States Parties, especially with developing countries.

In conclusion, may I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Fifteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

Thank you.

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