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The Hague

Statement by

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The Hague

In the Name of God

Mr. Chairperson,

I welcome you back Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki to chair this august body.

I also welcome the State of Palestine for its accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). My delegation considers it as a step forward in universality of the Convention. Accordingly, I request the States Parties and Technical Secretariat to put pressure on the outsiders, in particular Israeli

regime, to accede to the Convention as soon as possible and without any precondition.

I seize the opportunity to commemorate the 31st Anniversary of the tragic event of the use of chemical weapons in the city of Sardasht on June 28, 1987.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Islamic Republic of Iran as the main victim of chemical weapons in the 20th Century, condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstances and recognize it as a menace and violation of international law as well as the Convention. Hence, we have opted for upholding the global ban against the use of chemical weapons as one of the goals and purposes of our foreign policy. The impacts of the use of chemical weapons are so catastrophic that such a heinous act should absolutely result in serious consequences for the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is a unique instrument in the sphere of disarmament and nonproliferation. There is no other legally binding instrument relating to weapons of mass destruction as comprehensive and widely accepted as the CWC. One of the main accomplishments of the Convention and the OPCW, as its implementing body, is the establishment of an

effective verification regime that largely assures the abolishment of an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. The stringent CWC regime of inspections to verify compliance of 193 States Parties is a major contribution to preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons.

It is of great concern that while the destruction of the chemical weapons stockpiles by the only possessor State Party is yet to be completed, chemical weapons in the hands of terrorist groups especially in the Syrian Arab Republic initiated a new challenge for the international community and this Organization. The terrorist groups will not be able to procure toxic chemical and chemical weapons without financial and logistic support of a few States Parties and non-Parties to the Convention who are responsible for the lack of accountability by them. The impunity for the terrorist groups is not only a result of intentional inability to fight against it, but also the consequence of the absence of political will and voluntary inaction of their supporters.

Mr. Chairperson,

Given the fact that the two main events of the Organization i.e. the 23rd Conference of States Parties and the 4th Review Conference in 2018 are ahead, the request for convening another

Session of the Conference of the States Parties is an overburden on the States Parties to the Convention. We did not assume that holding a Special Conference of the States Parties would be necessary at this juncture especially when there is no consensus on the draft Decision proposed by the requesting States Parties at this special session. Aside from these facts, we are of the view that the request to hold Special Conference of the States Parties could not assist the Organization to its noble goals, but led to divergence of views among Members States.

It is highly expected that the States Parties avoid any attempt to play down the significance of the consensual approach in the Policy Making Organs of this Organization. During more than two decades of implementation of the Convention, the States Parties had been able to obtain valuable achievements based on the consensus and the spirit of solidarity among themselves. Any attempt towards undermining this valuable achievement will lead to confrontation and polarization of the States Parties and jeopardize the integrity of the Organization.

Regretfully during the past two decades some of the western States Parties have insisted stubbornly to deviate the OPCW from the track that has been outlined in the Convention and to extend or curtail the tasks and mandates of the Technical Secretariat according to their own interpretation of the provisions of the Convention.

Offering a new mandate of attribution of responsibility for chemical weapons attacks to the OPCW and the Director General is the last attempt of those States Parties to politicize the Organization and its Technical Secretariat. The Convention has not given the right or obligation of attributing the responsibility of the use of chemical weapons to the Director General or Technical Secretariat. The Technical Secretariat experts and inspectors are simply mandated in their missions to detect the technical facts in case of a chemical weapon incident. The staff of the Technical Secretariat and DG are not designated to go beyond the Convention and play the role of a judge to attribute the responsibility of chemical attacks to perpetrators.

We should not be oblivious of the fact that any misjudgment in this regard would cause a heavy burden of responsibility and liability for the Technical Secretariat and the DG and place their impartiality under question as well. Therefore attribution not only requires an amendment to the Convention and other relevant documents but also entails a serious risk for the staff of the Secretariat as a technical body.

Besides, the Technical Secretariat practically is not in a position to be able to identify the perpetrators of a chemical weapons attack since this would be a complicated political process especially in an environment that different terrorist groups are involved and have easy access to chemical weapons and toxic chemicals.

Furthermore the attribution responsibility has not been relegated, so far, to the head or staff of the secretariat in other disarmament treaties and conventions. Establishment of this mechanism in this Organization would be an unfortunate precedent.

The Decision adopted today deserves serious amendments. Unfortunately it was not drafted through consultation and dialogue with interested State Parties. The UK draft Decision with 5 requests for amendment has only been supported by 82 States Parties which is less than half of the number of the Members of this Organization. This is sad that such a risky task of attribution is given to the DG and a technical body without consensus and agreement of majority of the States Parties.

Mr. Chairperson,

Attribution is a term with political and judicial connotation and implication. My delegation is strongly in favor of the need to attribute the responsibility of the use of chemical weapons against anybody and anywhere. However we emphasize that OPCW is not the appropriate place for this. I have to remind this Conference that the measures to ensure compliance and to redress a situation in cases of particular gravity is stipulated precisely in Article XII of the Convention. We do bear in mind that United Nations Security Council had a failed effort in this regard but the failures of the Security Council, which is not the

first time in its history, should not inflict its unfavorable repercussions on the other organizations such as the OPCW.

Moreover, it is preposterous that the three permanent members of the Security Council supporting the idea of providing the OPCW with the attribution responsibility, have illegally attacked the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, as a State Party to the Convention and the OPCW, on the pretext of the use of chemical weapons and without any reliable evidence from the OPCW or approval from the UN Security Council. Their illegitimate military attacks against Syria suggest that the idea of attribution is just another excuse to manipulate and misuse this Organization and its Technical Secretariat.

Mr. Chairperson,

Distinguished Delegates,

The technicality and independence of the Secretariat of our Organization is at risk now. We should unite to promote the goals and objectives of the Convention by strengthening capabilities of the Technical Secretariat and implementing fully the provisions of the Convention.

I would kindly ask that this statement be issued as an official document of this Special Conference and placed on the OPCW public website.