



Statement by Ambassador Ms. Neelam D.
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Permanent Representative of India to the OPCW and
Leader of the Indian Delegation to the Second
Review Conference
April 7-18, 2008

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation joins me in congratulating you on your election as the Chairman of the Second Special Session of the Conference of States Parties. We have full confidence in your able and wise leadership and your fine diplomatic skills in steering the work of this important Conference. Let me assure you that you will have our full cooperation in your efforts to lead our collective endeavours to a successful conclusion.

2. May I take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Ambassador Lyn Parker, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, for the tireless work undertaken by him during the preparatory process. The work done by the Open-Ended Working Group under his Chairmanship has prepared the groundwork for the deliberations during this Second Special Session of the Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

3. My delegation fully endorses the statement delivered by H.E. the Deputy Minister of Cuba on behalf of the NAM States Parties to the CWC and China.

Mr. Chairman,

4. India attaches utmost importance to the Second Review Conference which will present states parties a good opportunity to look back at their achievements and challenges encountered during the last five years in implementing this unique disarmament Convention which is a multilaterally negotiated, non-discriminatory instrument which provides for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under an effective international verification regime.

5. What does our scorecard show – it is gratifying for all of us to see that the CWC has worked well in terms of faithful adherence by its states parties and the commitment to fulfil their obligations. We need to recognise that, an elaborate and comprehensive treaty like the CWC has worked effectively and has managed to establish a benchmark for the success of other global disarmament efforts. With a membership of 183 countries, the Convention can claim to be the only universally accepted disarmament regime in the world. The Technical Secretariat and its staff of highly trained professionals have worked equally hard in contributing to the success of the Convention. I am confident that, under the capable and dynamic leadership of the Director General, Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter, this organisation will retain its singular position as a truly successful disarmament convention.

6. As we review the operation of the CWC in the last five years, the Convention also tasks us to take into account scientific and technological developments. Indeed, advances in science and technology have taken place, but as we have seen, these have not posed a challenge to the fundamental framework of the Convention. Our deliberations at this conference will be served best by drawing upon the wisdom of the convention and by utilising fully the balance, the suppleness and its ability to foresee future challenges and with it, the appropriate responses. It was this approach at the First Review Conference that lent to the unqualified success of the OPCW and what it has achieved in the last five years. It now falls upon us to use this opportunity to build our success on the strengths of the Convention. Therefore, the most important task before the SRC is to uphold the convention in its entirety and reiterate our commitment to the balanced implementation of all its aspects.

Mr. Chairman,

7. India believes that the elimination of chemical weapons is the central objective of the Convention. In the ten years of its implementation the Convention has been able to achieve considerable success in the area of Chemical Weapons destruction. All Chemical Weapons states have made significant progress in recent years. Albania is the first possessor state to have completed the destruction of its entire stockpile, a state party will complete destruction soon. India has destroyed more than 97% of its chemical weapons and is well on its way to meeting its final destruction deadline of April 2009.

These are impressive achievements which the organization must take credit for.

8. However, it is also clear that with more than 60% of the total stockpiles of chemical weapons still to be destroyed, the main challenge before the Convention remains that of the complete destruction of all chemical weapons in a timely manner. The Review Conference will therefore have to accord the necessary primacy and importance to the chemical weapons destruction issues.

Mr. Chairman,

9. India recognizes the importance of verification measures for activities not prohibited under the Convention. We believe that the Second Review Conference should express satisfaction that the verification regime of the OPCW has performed well in practice and steady progress has been made towards increasing its effectiveness and efficiency.

10. In the last five years, the chemical industry verification regime has gathered momentum. The Convention clearly outlines the provisions for the verification of relevant chemical industry facilities. For the application of verification measures, the Annex on Chemicals lists the schedules in accordance with the hierarchy of risks posed by them to the object and purpose of the Convention. This hierarchy of risks determines the inter se priority of inspections of relevant facilities. We believe that our common objective is to ensure that the OPCW's verification activities are implemented in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, and relative to the risk the concerned facilities present to the object and purpose of the Convention.

11. The Convention obliges the States Parties to ensure its implementation in a comprehensive manner. India has an all-encompassing and comprehensive CWC Act which lays down the legal framework for a wide range of prohibitions and related penalties. Besides the CWC Act, India has also enacted the Weapons of Mass Destruction and Their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of unlawful activities) Act, 2005 as an overarching legislation to prohibit to manufacture, acquire, possess, develop or transport *inter alia* chemical weapons; and a clear and effective export control system for a wide range of dual use chemicals, materials and technologies.

Mr. Chairman,

12. India makes every effort to fulfil the obligations it has assumed under the Convention. Our record in ensuring compliance with the provisions of the CWC is second to none, and I would like to reiterate our continued commitment in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

13. The National implementation measures are important signposts to signal the success of the convention. The approach of encouragement, cooperation and assistance taken by States Parties since the adoption of the Action Plan on Article VII and subsequent follow up at the last few sessions of the Conference of States Parties has resulted in significant success in this area and states parties are continuing to make progress in putting into effect national implementation measures. We believe that the existing approach which has yielded positive results should be trusted.

Mr. Chairman,

14. The Provisions of the Convention pertaining to consultation and fact finding are important aspects of the convention and need to be invoked only under certain safeguards against abuse, and in exceptional circumstances. We would like the Second Review Conference to express satisfaction at the fact that no request for challenge inspection has been made so far which indicates that there is confidence in the way in which the verification regime has worked.

15. While, the First Review Conference had requested the Secretariat to be in a state of readiness to conduct challenge inspection, it should be recognized that there are several unresolved issues pertaining to challenge inspection that need to be resolved before any challenge inspection actually takes place.

Mr. Chairman,

16. India attaches importance to the full implementation of Article X of the Convention. Science & technology has shown that there are better and more efficient methods of assistance and protection, OPCW should have such information available. The Review Conference should recognize the importance of enhancing the OPCW's readiness to provide assistance in the event of use or threat of use of chemical weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

17. It is more than ten years since the entry into force of the CWC. An aspiration of the developing countries to benefit from economic and technological development from the peaceful uses of chemistry must be addressed in a holistic manner by the Second Review Conference. Renewed efforts have to be undertaken to reach agreement on issues that can lead to the full implementation of this Article. We continue to believe that development of an Action Plan is essential for the full implementation of Article XI. This being one of the important pillars of the Convention, we also believe that there should be steady increase in budgetary allocations from the regular programme and budget for its implementation.

18. One major trend in the chemical industry in recent years has been the spread of chemical production to new and non-traditional countries, which calls

for a renewed and substantial emphasis on international cooperation and support to these countries and their chemical industry in reaping the benefits of peaceful uses of chemistry and chemical technology. The shift, in fact, underscores even more the importance of providing financial and technological support as well as umbrella support services in the areas of health and safety measures, audit and quality standard and safe and responsible handling of chemicals.

Mr. Chairman,

19. The world today faces the very grave challenge of terrorism from which no country is immune. Our commitment to counter terrorism cannot be overemphasized. The OPCW can make a significant contribution to global anti-terrorist efforts by ensuring the full implementation of all aspects of the Convention, as it is, remains the necessary condition for the success of OPCW's contribution in the global anti-terrorist efforts. The full implementation of Article X which provides for assistance and protection has a crucial role to play in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

20. The Second Review Conference is mandated to review the operation of the Convention taking into account any relevant scientific and technological developments. New developments in science, convergence between biology and chemistry and the increasing global nature of the chemical industry are often cited as some of the future challenges for the Convention, which have also been dealt with in the report of the Scientific Advisory Board on Developments in Science and Technology to the Second Review Conference.

21. A preliminary reading of the report and Director General's observations indicate that balancing the provisions of the convention with scientific and technological breakthroughs is indeed a challenging task, particularly as SAB itself concludes that in many areas these have so far had little impact on the development of new chemical warfare agents. Clearly, much ground remains to be covered and more study is required to indicate the risk associated with the advances in science and technology in the field of Chemistry and their impact on the verification provisions of the Convention.

22. We feel that there is an urgent need to establish an institutional arrangement so that the recommendations of SAB are taken into consideration more meaningfully and in a more structured manner by the Executive Council and the Conference of States Parties. In order to achieve this end, we propose the creation of a standing committee of governmental experts of State Parties as a permanent mechanism to thoroughly examine the findings reached by SAB and prepare recommendations for the policy making organs of the OPCW.

23. In the light of the successes that have been achieved in the implementation of the CWC, there remains something to be said about the budget of the OPCW. It is commendable that using fiscal discipline, the organisation has been able to work with zero nominal growth budget in the last three years. With the gathering momentum of undertakings and obligations to implement the object and purpose of the convention, there is a strong case for enhanced budgetary support. We believe it is important that the core activities of the organisation are funded through the regular budgetary process.

24. India remains committed to making the Review Conference a success, something that will have vital implications for the working of the CWC over the next five years, and the Indian delegation will spare no efforts to play its part in ensuring such a satisfactory outcome of our collective efforts.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.