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IRAQ

**STATEMENT BY H.E. DR SA'AD ABDUL MAJEED IBRAHIM AL-ALI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE OPCW
AT THE SEVENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Excellency the Director-General of the OPCW,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me, Mr Chairperson, to congratulate and welcome you as you chair the Executive Council for the first time at this regular session, and to congratulate and welcome your vice-chairpersons, Excellencies Ambassadors of Italy, Cameroon, India and Ecuador, who serve for the first time in such capacity at this regular session. I wish also to welcome H. E. the Director-General of the OPCW and his Deputy. We are confident that our meeting will be crowned with success, thanks to your first-rate diplomatic skills. We affirm our support to all the decisions that the Council will take during this session, and to all the activities that the Director-General is following up and implementing, first among which the proposal to establish a global knowledge and expertise centre in the OPCW, with a view to achieving the lofty objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention, namely the safe application of chemistry for peaceful purposes. I wish also to support the statement delivered by H.E. Kazem Gharib Abadi, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the NAM States Parties and China.

I shouldn't fail to thank H.E. Ambassador Bhaswati Mukherjee, former Ambassador of India, for her great efforts during her term as chairperson of the Council. I wish also to thank my deputy, Mr Muhannad Almiahi, for whom this session of the Council shall be the last, for the excellent role he contributed to the OPCW during the last five years, as he acted as facilitator for Article VII issues. We had the hope that he would continue to work in this capacity. We wish him all success in his future career.

It is a source of pride and pleasure for me to represent my country's delegation and to update this august gathering on our important achievements during the last period, at the international as well as the national level. With respect to international activities, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2107 of 27 June 2013, which constitutes a turning point in Iraq's relationship with the international community. Thus, Iraq was removed from its obligations under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. These obligations, which have been imposed on Iraq for nearly 23 years, have become part of the past. This constitutes an acknowledgment by the international community that Iraq has taken the right path towards the fulfilment of its disarmament and non-proliferation obligations,



that it is mending its relationship with neighbouring States, striving to be a factor of stability in its regional and international environment, and distancing itself from anything that might escalate tension and deepen instability in the world. This was reinforced by the fact that, for the first time since its accession to the Convention in 2009, Iraq has assumed the chair position for the Disarmament Conference held in Geneva last month. This confirms my country's commitment to the lofty ideals of multilateralism, which uphold the credibility of the international community's collective responsibility to strengthen the international regime for disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. I wish to take this opportunity to affirm to you that the Government of the Republic of Iraq is committed to complying with the international treaties and conventions on disarmament and non-proliferation, pursuant to the provisions of its Permanent Constitution.

With regard to national activities, the security services in Iraq arrested, on 1 June 2013, the members of a terrorist cell and uncovered their crude attempts to use some chemical substances to carry out criminal terrorist attacks against innocent people. While we commend the concerted, continuous and sustained efforts of the security services in order to track and arrest such terrorist groups and foil their criminal plans, we reaffirm the commitment by the Government of the Republic of Iraq to comply with, and abide by, all provisions of international conventions, including the Chemical Weapons Convention, and implement their requirements. We wish to stress that the relevant authorities in Iraq are conducting a full inquiry to bring to light the circumstances surrounding this incident. Findings of the inquiry will be disclosed as soon as it is completed, and the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW will be apprised thereof as soon as possible.

We wish to affirm that fighting terrorism is a collective responsibility, in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 of 28 April 2004, which affirms that the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery constitutes a threat to international peace and security. Therefore, I wish to take this opportunity to urge States all over the world and, in particular, those neighbouring Iraq, to implement the provisions and requirements of this resolution. We call for making the necessary efforts to achieve the universality of international conventions on disarmament and non-proliferation, and for abiding by the principle of collective responsibility with a view to preventing the possession, transfer, use and threat of use of this type of devastating weapons, especially given that terrorism and terrorist networks and groups, which are causing suffering in Iraq and other States in the region and in the world, transcend the geographical borders and pursue the same end, which is to inflict all kinds of harm on innocent people, regardless of their national or ethnic origin, and to jeopardise regional and international peace and security.

With respect to progress achieved at the national level in disposing of the remnants of our chemical weapons, our government has taken serious and practical steps to develop the plan for the destruction of contents of Al-Muthanna storage bunkers 13 and 41. I will summarise these steps as follows:

Ongoing review of the various units of the gas evaluation system installed in Al-Muthanna, to test its capacity to withstand pressure and temperature. The review of the various units will be conducted during the next few months. It is hoped that the review of the system will be completed by the end of this year.

Elimination of some 70% of the remnants of the former production facilities in Falluja 1, and 40% of the remnants in Falluja 2. The remaining parts of the buildings in Al-Muthanna Facility site will be eliminated once the required appropriations are provided.

The first draft of the Detailed Facility Information (DTI) has been developed. It is hoped that this document will be finalised after completion of the evaluation.

As part of the cooperation with the States that had expressed their willingness to help Iraq dispose of the remaining materials in the said bunkers, a basic course on laboratory analysis was successfully completed in Spiez laboratory in Switzerland, last month. Another such course is scheduled for October. With regard to our cooperation with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, a second training course will be conducted in September. The training course for specialised Iraqi personnel on the use of the German evaluation equipment will be conducted in Germany in early November. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the delegations of the aforementioned States for their cooperation with, and support to, our national authorities in this important phase. I wish also to thank the Technical Secretariat for its constructive and continuous cooperation with my delegation, in The Hague and Baghdad, in order to complete the destruction of all remnants of the former Iraqi chemical programme.

Mr Chairperson,

I wish, finally, to reiterate and affirm anew the Iraqi Government's commitment to comply with all provisions of the Convention and to cooperate with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW and all its Member States with a view to achieving the objectives of the Convention, and ridding the world of chemical weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

I wish that this statement be adopted as one of the official documents of this session. I thank you.

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