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ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DR ALIREZA JAHANGIRI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I thank you Her Excellency and welcome you back to chair the Eighty-Eighth Session of the Executive Council. I wish you success in leading the current session and assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation.

I would like also to express my gratitude to the Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for his informative report delivered in this session. I express my appreciation for the dedicated efforts made by Ambassador Sheikh Mohammad Belal of Bangladesh as the former Chairperson of the Executive Council.

The Islamic Republic of Iran fully associates itself with the statement delivered by Her Excellency Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah, distinguished Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the OPCW on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China States Parties.

The existence of weapons of mass destruction continues to pose a threat to international peace and security. My delegation remains seriously concerned that the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles to date remains incomplete and that the object and purpose of the Convention has not yet been realised. We urge the only remaining possessor State Party to take every necessary measure to complete the destruction of its chemical arsenals as soon as possible.

Universality is essential to achieving the object and purpose of the Convention and enhancing the security of States Parties. It is crystal clear that remaining for a long time in a state of near-universality, offering chemical trade benefits to the non-Parties to the Convention, procrastination with regard to putting enough pressure upon the outsiders and incomplete destruction of stockpiles will never ensure the attainment of a world without chemical weapons. To achieve that goal the States Parties and the Technical Secretariat should intensify their efforts to find practical mechanisms to convince the non-Parties to accede to the Convention without delay.



Confronted with critical situations in a war-torn territory, the Syrian Arab Republic has taken a positive and commendable step to complete the destruction of its chemical weapons and facilities. It is worth mentioning that the Syrian Arab Republic has never hesitated to provide the Technical Secretariat, or the OPCW inspectors, with all the necessary information and access to areas upon their request. Despite the fact that the Syrian Arab Republic, as a State Party to the Convention, is in urgent need of technical assistance to improve its capacity to address its remaining commitments to rid the country of the damage resulting from the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups, some States Parties responsible for politicisation of this Organisation regretfully try to obfuscate and stigmatise the constructive cooperation of Syrian Arab Republic. We commend the high-level consultation between the Syrian National Authority and the Technical Secretariat to end all outstanding issues.

It is important that the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) act strictly in accordance with the high standards of the Chemical Weapons Convention and present verified, unquestionable results of investigations that re-create a real picture of the facts. We are convinced that further work on the Syrian case should be of a technical nature, carried out on a pragmatic and depoliticised basis. We note with severe concern the recent reports of the FFM on the use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in the Syrian Arab Republic, in which the main finding, the “likely” use of “chemicals”, is not sufficient to precisely and accurately establish the use of chemical weapons.

With regard to the latest report on Douma, which is an “interim” report, we hope that in the final version all of its weaknesses and contradictory statements be rectified, as the report states that inspection was not conducted immediately after the alleged incident, and there are questions regarding some evidence that has been gathered in a neighbouring country. There are some other observations regarding the report that can be discussed under the relevant agenda item.

On Article VII, my delegation believes that well-organised efforts with adequate resources for the full implementation of the provisions of this Article can be achieved through a tailor-made approach taking into account the priorities of States Parties. We have reviewed the non-paper on Article VII, which is not a result of the facilitation discussion. In our view it needs to be reformatted and revised.

Article X is an integral part of the security assurances inherited from the Chemical Weapons Convention; it has a dynamic nature and enables the Organisation to adjust itself to new challenges in case of use, or the threat of use, of chemical weapons against States Parties. Use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups in the Syrian Arab Republic is one of the recent challenges that give a new dimension to the urgency of the implementation of this Article. The Technical Secretariat is requested to continue organising capacity-building activities aimed at the development, and improvement, of national protection capabilities to respond to chemical attacks and other incidents involving toxic chemicals.

We are pleased to inform the States Parties that the tenth course on the medical aspects of assistance and protection against chemical weapons will be held in Tehran from 1 - 5 October 2018. The course, which is organised jointly by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Technical Secretariat, offers an opportunity to share the Islamic Republic of Iran’s experience and knowledge regarding the treatment of victims of chemical weapons, which it acquired during the eight year war in which Iraq, under the regime of Saddam, used chemical

weapons against the Iranian military and civilians. The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the States Parties to participate in this course.

The States Parties are committed to promoting economic and technological development through the international exchange of chemicals, equipment, and scientific and technical information on the basis of Article XI. We should bear in mind that taking unilateral coercive measures, in particular by imposing discriminatory restrictions on the trade and exchange of technology, materials, and equipment, as well as imposing import and export control regimes among States Parties, are against the letter and spirit of the Convention. Measures taken by the States Parties or the Technical Secretariat in combating terrorist groups and non-State actors should not have a diverse effect on the promotion of international and bilateral cooperation among the States Parties in fields not prohibited by the Convention. We note that holding annual review and evaluation workshops on the full implementation of Article XI could assist the States Parties in discovering and developing different ways of cooperation and capacity-building to realise the above-mentioned purposes. However, it is not satisfactory that the activities and discussions related to this Article are, deliberately or inadvertently, intertwined with various irrelevant issues that have caused the full implementation of the Article, and its main goals, to be partly inaccessible and complicated.

It should be noted that the draft recommendations of the Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priorities of the OPCW (OEWG-FP), despite the efforts of the facilitators, need to be seriously revised and rewritten in order to become balanced, consensus-based and within the framework of the Convention. In the meantime, I wish for a successful, inclusive, and consensus-driven discussion in the second cycle of the meetings of the OEWG for the Preparation of the Fourth Review Conference.

The composition of the Technical Secretariat should be based on equitable geographical distribution among and inside regional groups in a balanced manner. Furthermore, the recruitment of the staff of the Technical Secretariat deserves to be undertaken in coordination with the States Parties to the Convention.

The Fourth Special Session of the Conference of States Parties marks an awful moment in the history of this Organisation. The Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 dated 27 June 2018 that has been adopted by the votes of less than half of the Member States, with the assistance of the vote-bank of the western group and its allies, has, in contravention of the Convention, entrusted the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat with extra powers that equate to an amendment of the Convention. This result should have been achieved through Article XV of the Convention. The codification of the Convention was deliberately excluded during the negotiations. The decision works against the inclusive competence of the Technical Secretariat and Director-General as enshrined in the Convention. Not only is this unfortunate development an example of the politicisation and polarisation of the OPCW, but it also creates an unfortunate precedent and leads this Organisation towards a dangerous destiny. The Director-General and the Technical Secretariat do not deserve to suffer the consequences of assuming the responsibilities of a judge. The decision was the result of the voting of only 82 out of 193 States Parties, and was taken despite remarkable objections from some States Parties, indicating that it doesn't have a solid base and will not be supported properly. Therefore, its future can be seen as very challenging. The States Parties should urgently take the necessary measures to prevent the Director-General and Technical Secretariat from taking on this inappropriate duty.

In conclusion, Madam Chairperson, I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session and posted on the OPCW's public website.

Thank you.

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