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**BANGLADESH**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SHEIKH MOHAMMED BELAL  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH TO THE OPCW  
AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION  
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Chairperson of the Conference of the States Parties, Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki,  
Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü,  
Deputy Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Hamid Ali Rao,  
Members of international organisations, specialised agencies, and the scientific community,  
Members of civil society and NGOs,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I welcome Your Excellency Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki back as the Chairperson of the Conference of the States Parties. We are confident that under your able guidance and leadership, the conduct of business of this session will come to a successful conclusion. We pledge our full support and cooperation to you and the members of your Bureau in the discharge of your mandate.

We wish to commend the Director-General and his team in the Technical Secretariat for their hard work and dedicated efforts in the implementation of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The delegation of Bangladesh is once again honoured to pay accolade to Your Excellency Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for your invaluable contribution over the last eight years to the cause of humanity and for our shared goal of a world free of chemical weapons. We reiterate our support and confidence to the next Director-General Ambassador Fernando Arias.

There is no denying of the fact that the Chemical Weapons Convention is now passing through a challenging time owing to the numerous allegations of chemical weapons use in the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, Malaysia and in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. These allegations have painfully challenged our collective endeavour of campaigning to 'never again' have the use of chemical weapons anywhere under any circumstances.

The position of Bangladesh on weapons of mass destruction including chemical weapons is loud and clear. We would like to reiterate our long-standing principled position towards the



achievement of general and complete disarmament including the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, and reaffirm that the use of chemical weapons, and toxic chemicals as a weapon, anywhere by anyone and under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the provisions of the Convention and all norms of international law.

Bangladesh finds the Chemical Weapons Convention a model disarmament treaty. The Convention and the OPCW have enviable successes over the last twenty years including the destruction of over 96 percent of declared stockpiles of chemical weapons. We believe this Organisation has the innate power to free mankind from the scourge and horrors of chemical weapons. Bangladesh strongly condemns any use of chemical weapons, and toxic chemicals as a weapon, and reaffirms that those responsible must be held accountable. True to the mantra of our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman that “friendship to all, malice to none”, we reiterate our total support for the Convention. We congratulate and welcome the State of Palestine for their acceding to the Chemical Weapons Convention as the 193<sup>rd</sup> Member State of the OPCW.

The OPCW is now at a cross-road. Quite contrary to our expectation, chemical weapons have been used on the soil of the States Parties to the Convention. The threat of chemical terrorism has also become an unfortunate reality as non-State actors, including terrorist organisations, have reportedly gained knowledge and expertise to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer, and use chemical weapons. In such challenging times, we, the States Parties to the Convention need to redouble our efforts. Bangladesh, while fully affirming and reiterating its utmost support for the Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW, would like to see an unfailing response mechanism to the use of chemical weapons as well as to the threat of chemical terrorism. Our response mechanism should indulge in zero-tolerance towards the perpetrators, which use or intent to use, develop, manufacture, acquire, transport and transfer chemical weapons.

It is obvious that the changing security environment and advancement in science and technology, especially the convergence of chemistry and biology, nanotechnology, etc. have added new challenges to the States Parties, particularly the States Parties from the developing regions. To fully implement the Chemical Weapons Convention, the States Parties from the developing regions need appropriate assistance and technical support in this regard. The Convention must remain as a vanguard against chemical weapons all the time. The Technical Secretariat should assist the States Parties to implement their national obligations fully and to deal with any threat of chemical terrorism through capacity building and emergency assistance, when required. On the other hand, consistent with our shared goal of a world free of chemical weapons, our collective endeavour must find ways to identify and hold accountable all actors, including perpetrators, organisers, sponsors, etc. involved in the use of chemical weapons in recent times. We believe that with constructive dialogue and a renewed spirit of cooperation, the OPCW shall be able to eliminate the possibility of any further use of chemical weapons anywhere by anyone.

I consider myself fortunate to have frequented the floors of the OPCW long enough to say this. Suppose some hypothetical aliens have been watching the OPCW in its current state of affairs, they would say that we are doing much less than we are capable of doing and even less than what we promised when we became a signatory of the Convention. If some of the aliens were to be from the post-cold war generation, they would scream to remind us that with great powers comes great responsibility. They would remind us of the necessity of

dialogue, negotiation, compromise and working together as we promised in the Convention. Bangladesh is committed to do its part as it is our firm conviction that chemical weapons simply have no place in this century.

Before I conclude, my delegation also wishes to support the excellent proceedings being conducted by His Excellency Ambassador I Gusti Agung Waseka Puja of Indonesia for the preparation of the Fourth Review Conference of the OPCW. We hope that a spirit of consensus shall prevail in the OPCW leading towards the Fourth Review Conference.

I ask that this statement be circulated as an official document of this special session of the Conference of the States Parties.

I thank you.

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