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Mr Chairman, Director-General, Distinguished Delegates, CWC Coalition Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:

As we celebrate the 21st year of the 1997 entry-into-force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, we need to recognize numerous accomplishments of OPCW. It is indeed laudable to note the efforts of the OPCW in fostering international cooperation to strengthen implementation of the Convention and promote the peaceful use of chemistry. It is praiseworthy to note that over the past twenty-one years, approximately 96% of chemical weapon stockpiles declared by seven possessor states have been eliminated under the supervision of the OPCW. The OPCW also deserve much credit for addressing the challenges faced due to the non-state actors misusing chemicals. It is commendable to note that OPCW made efforts for conducting various outreach workshops and seminars and formulated different advisory committees.

Mr. Chairman,

OPCW have indeed come a long way since the Convention was opened for signature in 1993. But still there much to do, especially looking into the challenges today of chemical weapons use. The role of OPCW in countering CW terrorism, needs to be enhanced, well defined.

Mr Chairman,

To help build a more secure and sustainable world will require specific steps forward, namely, pursuing full universality of the Convention by reaching out to the four remaining countries – Egypt, Israel, North Korea, and South Sudan – to join the Convention and give up any and all chemical weapons stockpiles. We must press the States Parties which have not yet completed their national implementation of the Convention to do so, and continue verifying the ongoing safe destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles. Pressure needs to be maintained on United States of America as the US still has two stockpiles of CW left to be

destroyed and the deadline should not go beyond 2023. We commend Russia for completing the safe destruction of its seventh and last chemical weapons stockpile in Udmurtia on the 27th of September 2017, but should urge Russia to safely destroy its huge amount of liquid waste from its first-stage neutralization process before it could impact public health and the environment.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to note my appreciation for the efforts made by the OPCW for engaging various non-governmental stakeholders giving importance to public outreach and civil society's involvement to play a constructive role towards fulfilling the CWC's mandate. We cannot ignore the contribution made by our colleagues at the CWC Coalition. Various Non-governmental organisations in wider spectrum are contributing by sharing the information widely providing policy inputs and even supporting the victims of chemical attacks. It would be appropriate to mention the work done by The United Services Institution of India (USI) in New Delhi, in this respect. USI continues to stand tall on its mission to conduct policy research on chemical & biological weapons. USI is a non-partisan, autonomous think-tank dedicated to objective research and policy relevant studies on aspects of national and international security through the generation and dissemination of knowledge on defence and security-related issues. USI research is driven by a comprehensive agenda including issues related to Weapons of Mass Destruction. Being part of Science for Peace,(SfP), an NGO from Canada, I would like to mention that SfP makes a contribution by involving civil society through various forums to debate, highlight, and analyze issues concerning chemical weapons. SfP's working group on chemical weapons works with full sincerity for increasing awareness about OPCW and its activities. Through seminars and lectures, SfP reaches out to the wider audience in a comprehensive way, spreading the information about the less known matters of chemical weapons including chemical causalities, medical treatment of chemical weapons victims, psychological effects on victims and on families.

Mr Chairman,

Determining use of chemical agents & weapons is important particularly looking into recent incidents in Syria and the UK; concerns raised, hence, need to take cognisance to the facts and verification has to be done. There is a need to support Fact-Finding Mission efforts. All infringements of the Convention should be carefully, professionally, and fairly investigated

for creating a world free of chemical weapons and preventing inhumane and vicious chemical attacks.

Finally, I would like to mention that there is a long way to go to save the world from Chemical weapons, maintain peace and reduce the risk to humanity and that need to be evaluated and reassessed during this Fourth Review Conference. More outreach is required and a road map for future activities could include constant and healthy networking with similar non-governmental organisations. OPCW has to continue the joint work along with scientists, academics, and with the civil society for preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons.

I thank you Mr Chairman – and thank you all for your kind attention and I wish for this statement to be made part of the final CSP record and posted on the OPCW website.
