

Statement of the Israeli Delegation

Mr. Chairperson,
Excellency Director General,
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset of the fourth review conference of the Chemical Weapon Convention, allow me also to congratulate H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias on assuming the position of the Director General of the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons since July 2018, and wish him and his team success with the challenges that lie ahead. Congratulation to the Chairperson and vice-Chairpersons on their election too, I can assure you my delegation's cooperation combined with the hope for fruitful outcome.

Mr. Chairperson,
Since its establishment, the Chemical Weapon Convention achieved a great deal in creating norms and set of values, for the international community to comply and obey by. Based on lessons learned from history, it was clear that prohibition, compliance and verification are essential for it to succeed.

In this regard, the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is of an utmost importance. We also welcome initiatives that strengthen existing related instruments, as the French initiative on the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons; and the adoption of a new regime of restrictive

measures to address the use and proliferation of chemical weapons by the European Council.

Unfortunately, in recent years we have witnessed an erosion of the absolute prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, joined by an erosion in compliance to treaties at large, Chemical Weapon Convention included, and an erosion of norms and values – not surprisingly - especially in the Middle East.

The continued use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime, even after its accession to the CWC, is not only morally abhorrent; it is also a clear violation of the legal obligations the Syrian regime has undertaken towards the international community to forgo these weapons. There is no greater challenge to the CWC, and the norms contained therein, than a State Party using chemical weapons. Its falsified statements, its residual capabilities and its renewed chemical weapon program must be addressed.

Mr. Chairperson,

At times, it is essential to go back to the text. It should be very clear that the use of toxic chemicals and their precursors, as a weapon, by any party to the convention, goes against the foundations of the Chemical Weapon Convention. These violations and non-compliance undermine the international norms and goals.

Article I of the Convention, on the General Obligations, Para 1, states: that "Each State Party to this Convention undertakes never under any circumstances: (a) To develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile or retain chemical weapons, or transfer, directly or indirectly, chemical

weapons to anyone; (b) to use chemical weapons; (c) to engage in any military preparations to use chemical weapons;"

Article II of the convention, on Definitions and Criteria, Para 1, states: that "Chemical Weapons" means the following, together or separately: (a) Toxic chemicals and their precursors, except where intended for purposes not prohibited under this convention, as long as the types and quantities are consistent with such purposes; (b) Munitions and devices, specially designed to cause death or other harm through the toxic properties of those toxic chemicals specified in subparagraph (a), which would be released as a result of the employment of such munitions and devices;"

Since 2013 until today, approximately 200 cases of use of Toxic chemicals and their precursors, as a weapon, were reported. These reports mostly refer to use by the Syrian regime, but also by other players in the region. It undermines the credibility of the Convention and sends the wrong message to the users of chemical weapons. That includes different weaponized formats and designs, traditional and new, PBA's (Pharmaceutical Based Agents), once used as a chemical weapon, especially in the Middle East.

Compliance and Verification are essential for confidence building and security. Hence, attribution of the use of these Chemical Weapons, and accountability, must go hand in hand within the convention. In addition, recurrence of use of chemical weapons must be met with a serious and severe response of the international community.

Mr. Chairperson,

Israel participated actively in the negotiations and signed the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993, reflecting its support of the goals and purposes of this Treaty, and it shares the values and the norms this Treaty represents.

This signature joined Israel's accession to the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Method of Warfare, its adherence to export control regimes, including the Australian Group, as well as its traditional support for the United Nation General Assembly First Committee resolution regarding the CWC.

As a signatory to the convention, we hope that others in the region who did not do so thus far, will at least join us in signing it, as a message for their commitment to the norms and values it represents. We also call upon the international community to send a strong and clear message to the violators of the Convention.

Thanks you Mr. Chairperson.

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Mr. Chairperson,

Israel would like to place on record, that the Government of the State of Israel does not recognize the Palestinian Authority as a State. The Palestinian Authority does not satisfy the criteria for statehood under both general international law and the terms of bilateral Israeli-Palestinian agreements.

In this regard, the term "State" does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever concerning the legal status of "Palestine".

I would like to reiterate the position expressed by Israel's Ambassador to the UN on November 29th, 2012, in the context of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 67/19 as well as in the Security Council on January 23rd, 2013.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.