

**Pakistan Statement by Ambassador Shujjat Ali Rathore, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and Leader of the Pakistan delegation at the Fourth Review Conference**

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to begin by congratulating you on your election to Chair the Fourth Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We have every confidence that given your well-known diplomatic skills and experience, this Conference would be guided to a successful conclusion. Please be assured of the full cooperation and support of my delegation.

Within the format of the Conference of States Parties, our Director-General is participating for the first time and I warmly welcome him. His statement this morning reinforces our conviction that he will lead the Organisation wisely and efficiently.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group, H.E. Ambassador I. Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja of Indonesia for his laudable efforts in the preparations leading to this Conference.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Representative of Venezuela on behalf of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

Mr. Chairman,

In 2013 – the year the last Review Conference was held - the OPCW was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its outstanding contribution to global peace and security. Since then the Organisation has been called upon to shoulder onerous tasks and has dealt with unprecedented challenges. What has been achieved within the framework of the Convention goes well beyond a ban on chemical weapons.



In just over two decades, the Chemical Weapons Convention has become a bulwark against an entire category of Weapons of Mass Destruction and an example of multilateralism that is worth emulating in other areas.

The Convention embodies the idea that unity based on principles of equity serves the interests of all; it enables a healthy and productive environment for the advancement of common interests, and ultimately leads to strengthening our shared objective of promoting global peace and security.

Pakistan's strong support for the Convention is based on our consistent policy of endorsing all legal instruments and initiatives that promote disarmament, non-proliferation, regional and international security on a just and equitable basis, as well as recognise the right of all nations to equal security.

Mr. Chairman,

A key goal of the Convention is to eliminate existing stocks of chemical weapons. This is an essential condition for the world to be completely rid of this scourge. It is indeed a matter of satisfaction that 96 percent of all declared stockpiles of chemical weapons have been eliminated as verified by the OPCW.

Since the last Review Conference, the Russian Federation has completed its destruction programme. The quantities of weapons destroyed are significant and we congratulate the Russian Federation on this achievement.

The extraordinary and successful demilitarisation mission in the Syrian Arab Republic was a true milestone in the work of the Organisation. Other recent and notable developments are the completion of the campaign in Libya and the elimination of chemical weapons remnants in Iraq.

The United States of America as a major possessor is expected to complete its chemical weapons destruction by the year 2023 and we encourage it to stay the course. We also hope that issue of abandoned chemical weapons comes to a satisfactory conclusion through the expeditious and safe destruction of all remaining weapons.



While the elimination of all declared chemical weapons will signify a major achievement in disarmament, it will not necessarily mean that the world has been completely rid of these weapons. For such an assurance, the universality of the Convention is a necessity. This means that every country in the world legally abides by the global prohibition on chemical weapons including the attendant obligation to accept verification. We call upon all countries that are absent from the list of CWC States Parties to join the Convention at the earliest.

Progress in disarmament, advances in science and technology and contemporary security challenges make a combined impact on the work of the OPCW.

The Fourth Review Conference is an occasion to take stock. It is an opportunity for establishing a framework that will ensure that Convention remains relevant for all times to come.

The OPCW Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) plays a vital role in flagging issues relevant to the Convention's objectives. This Conference should support the work of SAB and of the need for a continuous examination of all such developments that pose a risk to the Convention's goals. There is also a need to more effectively channel the advice provided by SAB into the policy making process. Pakistan supports the initiative to upgrade the OPCW laboratory to a Centre of Chemistry and Technology. In addition to supporting the evolving demands of the Convention's verification regime, the Centre should also foster cooperation activities in scientific research to the benefit of all States Parties.

International cooperation remains the bedrock of the Convention's universal support. The Review Conference must once again recognise the critical importance of full implementation of Articles X and XI of the Convention.

Pakistan welcomes the establishment of the Rapid Response and Assistance Mission (RRAM) and we hope that its capabilities would be further enhanced in keeping with the evolving-security environment.

It is now clear that our endeavours to cement the future relevance of the Convention cannot be divorced from the need to advance its objectives in a



cooperative framework in which the benefits of membership of the OPCW are clearly identifiable and tangible.

In the face of global challenges impacting the Convention, enhanced international cooperation will be vital to making the Organisation effective in such areas as counter-terrorism, enhancing chemical safety and security and broadening outreach and education. The threat of acquisition and use of chemical weapons by non-state actors looms large. It is a trans-national threat. Enhancing mutual cooperation and coordination and capacity building is vital as a means of promoting common security.

Promoting national implementation of the Convention has remained a priority for the OPCW. Here again a cooperative approach has yielded dividends and offers the best avenue to further progress. We fully support the objective of reaching a stage where all States Parties will have effective national laws and administrative means to enforce the Convention's prohibitions within their national jurisdictions.

On its part Pakistan has long maintained an effective legal regime pursuant to the Convention's requirements. We have declared a national protective program and are pursuing all possible measures to enhance national capacity and potential to guard against chemical threats. We established a national authority in the year 2000, as well as a comprehensive system for stake holder involvement.

In collaboration with the Technical Secretariat, we continue to host several regional and international capacity building courses in Pakistan. We have also established a sub-regional Assistance and Protection Centre in Pakistan which serves as a Centre of Excellence in the region. OPCW's collaboration with the World Customs Organisation is to be warmly welcomed and enhanced for the benefit of all States Parties.

The OPCW has in the past been successful in arriving at agreed positions with respect to forward movement on a number of subjects relevant to Article XI. It is important to take this process forward. This can only yield positive and constructive avenues for advancing our collective goal of strengthening the CWC.



I will also reiterate here the importance of implementing the provisions of the Convention in a manner that does not ignore or hamper the economic and technological development of the States Parties for peaceful purposes. This is critical for the Convention to retain the goodwill and support of the general membership of the Organisation.

We fully support the Secretariat's efforts at broadening the scope and deepening the intensity of interaction with external stakeholders. The work of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach is a welcome addition to these efforts.

Mr Chairman,

The most serious challenge to the integrity and effectiveness of the Convention comes from the recent repeated use of chemical weapons. This has occurred in situations of armed conflict and as a tool of crime and terrorism. Pakistan reiterates its categorical condemnation of these heinous acts. We stand committed to the declaration issued by OPCW States Parties that any use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances is reprehensible and contrary to the legal norms and standards of the international community. Although we are nearing complete destruction of chemical weapons from the world, however, such incidents are stark reminders that our work is far from over.

With regard to investigations into incidents of chemical weapons use in Syria, we urge cooperation between Syria and the OPCW. We further hope that the Technical Secretariat and Syria will in a spirit of cooperation and fair play resolve all outstanding issues relating to Syria's declaration of its chemical weapons programme.

Mr. Chairman,

We are embarking on an exercise to renew our commitment to the objectives of the CWC; to chart a road map for the Organisation so that it continues its exemplary role in upholding essential norms and in promoting peace.

We are all aware of where the challenges lie. An unexpected and undesirable trend must count as one such challenge. This is the tendency to reach for far-reaching



decisions while not respecting the long and vital tradition of consensus. This approach might yield short term political gain. But it does not accord with the long term interests of the OPCW.

In recent months certain decisions have been adopted whose implications are yet unknown. What we will emphasise is the absolute need for the Organisation to function strictly in accordance with the Convention. The separation of responsibilities in terms of functions assigned to the Secretariat and to the policy making organs must be maintained and respected. Just as we do not support intrusions into the responsibilities of the Secretariat, we cannot support the latter exercising responsibilities beyond its pale.

Placing the Secretariat in an expanding role that transcends fact collection and encroaches into judgements cannot serve the interests of the OPCW. It threatens to unravel the already strained political fabric of our Organisation.

We call on all States Parties to carefully deliberate and reach common understandings on the way forward on some of these critical issues. That would help restore the congenial and constructive spirit we all accustomed to. That environment has been the single most important factor that has propelled the OPCW to the success story that it exemplifies.

It remains our hope that in the coming days we will reach for the reservoirs of energy and goodwill that are necessary for us to succeed in this Conference and beyond.

Thank you.

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