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ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. DR GHOLAMHOSSEIN DEGHANI DEPUTY FOREIGN
MINISTER FOR LEGAL AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS OF THE
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW THE
OPERATION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

Mr Chairman,
Mr Director-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a distinct honour for me to participate in this Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“Fourth Review Conference”). At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on assuming the chair of the Fourth Review Conference. I would also like to welcome our new able Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias González, and wish him a very successful tenure. I am also obliged to appreciate the leadership of Ambassador Puja of Indonesia during the deliberations of the Open-Ended Working Group. My delegation associates itself with the statement by the distinguished Ambassador of Venezuela delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

Mr Chairman,

I am representing a country with a clear-cut policy as well as moral and legal commitments against any sort of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. Our civilians and servicemen suffered as a result of chemical weapon attacks by a despotic regime led by Saddam Hussein. My delegation is accompanied by a group of chemically injured victims who have endured severe and chronic conditions in the last three decades. They have organised a very relevant exhibition on the sidelines of this Review Conference that I invite you to visit.

Notwithstanding the international community did “nothing” to stop Saddam from using chemical weapons against my country, the tragedy triggered efforts towards the conclusion of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”), a Convention that, in spite of great achievements during last three decades, its integrity, consistency, and effectiveness are now at risk. We remain hopeful that this Review Conference can highlight the risks the Convention faces.



Since the last Review Conference in 2013, we have witnessed continued deficiencies and non-compliance by certain States Parties with serious damaging impacts on the Convention and the OPCW, including the following:

1. The continued devious double games by certain States Parties to the Convention have given certain leeway to some terrorist groups leading to the uses of chemical weapons by them in several occasions.
2. The United States of America under the pretext of technical problems to continuous refrain from purging its chemical arsenal, the main obligation under the Convention and the top priority of the OPCW. In the meantime, other major possessor State, Russian Federation, met the revised deadline and destroyed its chemical stockpiles. Even Syria, which joined the Convention following the last Review Conference, also eliminated its chemical weapons, while itself has been a target of chemical attacks by ISIS and other terrorist groups.
3. The universality of the Convention is still unrealised due mainly to its non-ratification by the Israeli regime which possesses WMDs including chemical weapons. This regime's refusal, supported by the United States, to join the NPT and the Convention continues to complicate the dynamics of peace and security in the Middle East.
4. The unilateral approach and practices of the current United States administration has also adversely affected the machinery of the OPCW and its consensus-based decision making process. The weak decision on attribution responsibility made by a vote in the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties contravenes Article XV of the Convention, which requires the holding of an amendment conference for that purpose. Given the importance and the value of consensus in all WMD-related contexts, including in the OPCW, there is strong and urgent need to redress the situation, revoking any legal implications therefrom.

Distinguished delegates,

In a prospective context, we expect this Review Conference to focus, among others, on the following areas:

1. Addressing and redressing the consequences of the anomalies and irregularities that I referred to earlier.
2. Ensuring the integrity of the Convention, including through properly implementing Article XI and prioritising the relevant action plan and refraining from misinterpreting this Article and Article X. The arbitrary moves by some States Parties to impede legitimate transfer of Chemicals have no basis in the Convention and are detrimental to the economic development of the States Parties. Therefore, export control regimes need to be brought in line with the provisions of Article XI (2e), which aims to promote chemical trade among States Parties. Here, I would like to specially highlight and reject the unlawful general United States addiction to sanctions which, inter alia, impose unilateral coercive measures in the field of peaceful uses of chemistry as well as banking restrictions which, among others, directly affect the medical treatment of the Iranian victims of chemical weapons.

3. Supporting the independence and efficiency of the Organisation. The OPCW's decisions on its future priorities and its collaboration with other international organisations should be made transparently, inclusively, and on a consensual basis.
4. Strengthening the Technical Secretariat ("the Secretariat"). There is a constant need for enhancing the Secretariat's human and other capacities to help it fulfil its mandates. The equitable distribution of posts in the Secretariat also needs to be guaranteed.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, let me assure you, Director-General and the States Parties of our full support and active participation to make this Review Conference a success.

I wish to request this statement be circulated as an official document of this session and posted both on the external and public website of the OPCW.

Thank you for your attention.

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