



OPCW

Executive Council

Ninetieth Session
12 – 15 March 2019

EC-90/NAT.10
12 March 2019
ENGLISH only

BANGLADESH

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SHEIKH MOHAMMED BELAL
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
TO THE OPCW AT THE NINETIETH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Chairperson of the Executive Council, Ambassador Jana Reinišová,
Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias,
Deputy Director-General, Ambassador Odette Melono,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I welcome Your Excellency Ambassador Jana Reinišová. I also take the privilege to congratulate Your Excellency Ambassador Odette Melono on your appointment as the Deputy Director-General of the OPCW. We pledge our full support to you in the discharge of your mandate.

As this session is the last regular session for the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Executive Council (“the Council”), my delegation would like to register our deepest appreciation to you for your hard work for the cause towards our collective endeavour of a world free of chemical weapons. I also take the opportunity to express our best wishes to the new Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Council, who are expected to be elected in this session.

My delegation wishes to thank the Director-General for his comprehensive statement as well as the Vice-Chairpersons for their respective reports presented at this session. The delegation of Bangladesh wishes to commend the Director-General and his team in the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) for their hard work and dedicated efforts in the implementation of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”). My delegation also likes to see consensus among States Parties to provide the space in the form of a flexible tenure policy to the captain that we, the State Parties, have appointed to steer our ship, the OPCW, in a turbulent and challenging sea.

Bangladesh’s delegation aligns itself with the statement made at this session by the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Her Excellency Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah, on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China. In our quest for chemical disarmament, as heat continues, to accumulate on the floor of this august body, let us engage in a culture of disarmament first. The pre-requisite of this culture of disarmament is to remind ourselves that we made a promise of “never again” while seeking eternal peace for all the victims of chemical weapons.



We once again would like to register our gratitude to Ambassador Agustín Vásquez Gómez of El Salvador, Ambassador Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja of Indonesia, and Ambassador Marcin Czepelak of Poland for their hard work and dedicated efforts in the Fourth Review Conference. We believe the Fourth Review Conference reminded us that the global norm against chemical weapons is not only a legal agreement, but also a moral and ethical declaration about the dignity of humanity.

Therefore, Bangladesh hopes to see the States Parties' further collective endeavour in implementing the important outcomes of the Fourth Review Conference, especially the issues which have broad-based consensus, through constructive dialogue and spirit of cooperation in the days ahead. In this regard, we would urge the Secretariat and States Parties for speedy arrangements for funding for paid interns as well as a JPO programme showing a culture of outreach to the unreached as soon as possible. We join you in urging for gender equality and also urge you to join us so that the issue of "gender equality" doesn't stop at the immigration and thereby stopping us also to get the much awaited dream land of "geographical diversity" in the OPCW.

Bangladesh reiterates its full support to the project of upgrading the OPCW Laboratory into a Centre for Chemistry and Technology. My delegation would like to warmly acknowledge the generous contribution of Belgium, Canada, Estonia, the European Union, France, Italy, Japan, Poland, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Spain, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the likes towards preparing the OPCW for a better tomorrow. I would like to announce that Bangladesh would make a modest contribution to this project soon.

I would like to reiterate that only our unflinching commitment to the Convention in its entirety in letter and spirit can make us more secure from the scourge and horrors of chemical weapons. However, we are once again saddened by the 1 March 2019 report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria, which concludes with reasonable grounds that toxic chemical – likely molecular chlorine – was used as a weapon in Douma of Syrian Arab Republic on 7 April 2018. In this regard, Bangladesh reiterates its long-standing principled position towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament including the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction and reaffirms that the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as a weapon under any circumstances is completely contrary to the provisions of the Convention and all norms of international law.

With profound sorrow, I would like to inform you that a fire broke out in a warehouse in old part of Dhaka City in the night of 20 February 2019 killing at least 71 individuals and injuring more than 50 others. Although the report of the government-formed inquiry committee is yet to publish its findings on the reasons of the fire break-out, but reports suggest that storage of flammable substances in the first floor of a building is the reason of the devastating blaze. This incident calls for the increased support of the States Parties and the Secretariat for the capacity building of the countries like ours in the domain of assistance and protection to address such kinds of accidents and their fatal consequences. My delegation wishes to register our deep appreciation to His Excellency Bruce Koloane of South Africa for bringing to us a precedent of best case scenario when he presented Germany showing their endeavour to deal with a Convention-scheduled chemical with utmost innovation, intensity, and speed while remaining compliant to the norms of international law. We also thank Germany for their keenness to share their experience and willingness to assist others so that the culture of "never again" may truly remain as it was promised by all of us.

We believe that adoption of an action plan for the full and effective implementation of Article XI is paramount for the promotion of peaceful uses of chemistry. While emphasising the importance of economic and technological development of the States Parties as well as the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals under the auspices of international cooperation, we would like to urge the States Parties and the Secretariat for enhanced collaboration and engagements for effective implementation of the Article XI of the Convention.

We would like to appreciate the Secretariat for webcasting the Informal Consultation on Chemical Industry Issues on 11 March 2019 to enable National Authority Representatives to remotely observe consultation proceedings. We would request that the Secretariat make similar arrangements, whenever possible, for consultations, workshops, etc. to engage the National Authority Representatives remotely to the OPCW affairs.

I ask that this statement be circulated as an official document of this Ninetieth Session of the Council. I thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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