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ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR REZA NAJAFI
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OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,
Mr Director General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to thank you, Madam Chairperson, and welcome you back to chair the Ninetieth Session of the Executive Council (“the Council”). I wish you success and assure you of full cooperation of my delegation.

My delegation expresses its gratitude to the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, for his comprehensive report delivered in this Session.

I would like also to stress that my delegation is fully associated with the statement delivered by Her Excellency Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah, distinguished Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the OPCW on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

My delegation remains seriously concerned that the total destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles has not been completed to date and thus the main object and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) has yet to be achieved. We urge the United States of America, the only remaining possessor State Party, to take every necessary measure to complete its destruction process before the scheduled timeline with a view to ensure its compliance with the Convention. Given the fact that the United States has already used chemical weapons in Vietnam War and has still maintained its reservation on the 1925 Geneva Protocol for using chemical weapons in a retaliatory manner, in full non-compliance with the Convention, the continuation of its chemical weapons stockpile is a matter of serious concern.

The universality of the Convention and destruction of chemical weapons are two main elements of chemical disarmament and essential to achieve the object and purpose of the Convention as well as to enhance the security of States Parties, particularly in the volatile region of the Middle East where Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) of Israeli regime is a major threat to the neighbouring countries and to the international peace and security. Obviously near-universality and incomplete destruction of stockpiles will never ensure us to



attain a world without chemical weapons. Unless these two goals are attained, the re-emergence of the chemical weapons will always be on the horizon.

In a region where its immediate neighbour Israeli regime has all kinds of WMD and a history full of aggression and occupation, the Syrian Arab Republic, after joining the OPCW, has taken positive and commendable steps to complete the destruction of its chemical weapons and related facilities. The Syrian National Authority has never hesitated to provide the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) and the OPCW Inspectors with all necessary information and access to the selected areas upon their request. Syria as a State Party to the Convention confronting with a critical situation in its territory is in urgent need of technical cooperation to improve its capacity in order to address its remaining commitments to make the country free of damages of the use of chemical weapons by the terrorist groups and non-State actors. It is unfortunate that some States Parties instead of collaborating with the Syrian Government to eradicate chemical terrorism in this country are regrettably trying to obfuscate its constructive cooperation. We welcome and encourage the high-level consultation process between the Syrian National Authority and the Secretariat in order to put an end to the few remaining issues.

As a main chemical weapons victim, Iran strongly condemns any use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. However, it is necessary to ensure that the OPCW, within its mandate, work closely with the Syrian Arab Republic to clarify the situation in connection with all cases of alleged use of chemical weapons therein. It is important that the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) act strictly in accordance with the high standards of the Convention and present accurate, professional, impartial, and unquestionable results of investigations that reflect a real picture of the facts. The information used in this context should certainly be based on credible and not open sources the validity and authenticity of which are dubious.

My delegation thanks the Secretariat for the efforts it made to provide reports on its work. However, we are not still satisfied of the work methodology of the FFM Team in the Syrian Arab Republic. It is also disagreeable that the issuance of the final report regarding the alleged use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in Douma has lasted nearly one year after the incident on 7 April 2018. Further work in Syria should be of a technical nature and carried out on a pragmatic and depoliticised basis.

The controversial, political, and non-consensual decision (C-SS-4/DEC.3) of the Fourth Special Conference of States Parties has unlawfully tasked the OPCW inspectors and the Secretariat with conducting attribution investigations and thereby deflecting the Organisation from its technical and specialized nature and its well-defined mandate.

Terrorism in all its aspects, including chemical terrorism has been a matter of grave concern in recent years. One of the recent instances of the role of the Organisation in combating chemical terrorism is in Syria where investigations of the Secretariat were carried out over the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups. The Secretariat investigations shed light on the responsibility of the terrorist groups for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. However, if the well-known terrorist groups left without punishment or counteraction, the hope for a world free from chemical terrorism would fade away. As it was reconfirmed by its current president during the election campaign, the previous United States administrations were “the founder of ISIS” (Daesh) and the “co-founder” of the other terrorist and extremist groups in

the Middle East. Thus the responsibility of possible use of chemical weapons by Daesh is on the United States shoulders.

Having underlined the necessity of upholding independence and identity of the OPCW as a disarmament organisation, my delegation disapproves of modifying its mandate in such a way that it looks like a mere anti-terrorism organisation. As long as there exists “chemical weapons possessor” inside or outside of the Convention, the OPCW remains a disarmament organisation. Given the technical and specialised nature of the work of the Secretariat, we are of the view that the priority and urgency for the OPCW to tackle chemical terrorism should be under Article VII for prevention and Article X for extending assistance and protection with due regard to humanitarian aspects.

With a view to let the Organisation build its future work for the next five years, my delegation by showing enormous flexibility sacrificed and overlooked a lot of its significant concrete proposals in order to prepare a common ground for reaching a consensus on the Draft Report submitted by the chairperson of the Fourth Review Conference. Regretfully, the Conference owing to politicisation on some issues by certain States Parties could not manage to reach a consensus. A consensus which in view of one delegation is meant everybody should follow the United States interests like in the case of Saddam’s regime to support it when it was using chemical weapons and to wage a war against it when it destroyed all of its chemical weapons.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight a humanitarian issue that has already been raised by the Iranian NGOs, victims of chemical weapons during the Fourth Review Conference in November 2018. Unfortunately, the chemical weapons victims, who have definitely been cared for by this Organisation from the beginning, are deprived of access to required medicine necessary to keep them alive. The irresponsible, immoral, coercive, and egocentric demeanor of one of the States Parties in imposing unilateral sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran and bullying the other States Parties to follow suit has caused ruthless psychological and medical effects upon the victims. We expect that the States Parties and the Secretariat play a positive and effective role to prevent such malicious behaviour against the chemical victims.

I request that this Statement be circulated as an official document of this session and posted on the OPCW's public website.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson

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