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BANGLADESH

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

Chairperson of the Executive Council, Ambassador Mr Andrea Perugini,
Director-General, Ambassador Mr Fernando Arias,
Deputy Director-General, Ambassador Mrs Odette Melono,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

At the very outset, I would like to welcome Your Excellency Mr Andrea Perugini as the Chairperson of the Executive Council (“the Council”). We express our confidence in you and hope that the conduct of business of this session will come to a successful conclusion under your able leadership. We pledge our full support to you in the discharge of your mandate.

My delegation wishes to thank the Director-General for his expansive 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 work and efforts in the implementation of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”).

Bangladesh 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.

Bangladesh finds the Convention a model disarmament treaty. We believe a culture of consensus among ourselves serves the best in our quest for chemical disarmament and preventing re-emergence of chemical weapons. The pre-requisite of this 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, as well as strong support, to Ambassador Agustín Vásquez Gómez of El Salvador and Ambassador Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja of Indonesia for their hard work and dedicated efforts in the Fourth Review Conference, and



subsequently as Co-facilitators following their appointment at the Ninetieth Session of the Council.

Bangladesh hopes to see the two distinguished Ambassadors as Co-chairpersons of an Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) to discuss further with the States Parties through constructive dialogue and spirit of cooperation on the Secretariat's Non-Paper on "Ensuring Diverse and Qualified Workforce of the Technical Secretariat" as well as on the pertinent issues concerning the effective implementation of the Convention, which have broad-based consensus among the States Parties.

Allow me to share our aspirations from this OEWG. We believe we all agree that this Organization, the OPCW, which is meant to implement the only successful disarmament treaty in the history of mankind, embodies the highest aspirations of the peoples of the world. The Secretariat bears responsibility for translating their aspirations into reality. It relies on the great traditions of honesty in the public administration. Creating a culture of honesty isn't rocket science, but it does take discipline and constant attention. Candour doesn't simply happen organically. It requires a willingness to work without bias with persons of all nationalities, regions and cultures. It is, therefore, expected from the Secretariat to adhere to the highest standards of conduct. For, ultimately, it is this Secretariat that will enable the Convention to bring about a peaceful world through successful pursuit of a campaign of "never again".

In a recent report by the Secretariat, there was a reference to shortage of qualified candidates from some regions; which we find it troubling. Therefore, we would request you, urge you, to go beyond the idiosyncrasies and see why don't they apply? If people don't believe they will be treated fairly because of who they are or where they come from they are likely not to apply for the job, meaning the organization misses out on a diversity of candidates, and is worse off in the long-term by simply hiring someone just like the person who was in the job previously. A belief in equality and fairness, or lack thereof, doesn't just affect big decisions, it can also affect daily decisions that we experience or implement.

Consistent with the Preamble of the Convention, which, among others, calls for promotion of free trade in chemicals as well as international cooperation and exchange of scientific and technical information in the field of chemical activities in order to enhance the economic and technological development of all States Parties, Bangladesh would like to underline the importance of the promotion of international cooperation for the benefit of States Parties.

Bangladesh, therefore, welcomes the successful convening of the 2019 Review and Evaluation Workshop of the Components of an Agreed Framework for the Implementation of Article XI, on 1 July 2019 at the OPCW HQ. We actively participated in the workshop. We feel that it is high time to make a thorough assessment with data, backed by research, of the 2011 Conference Decision on the Components of an Agreed Framework for our further moving forward in this regard.

I would like to inform this august body that Bangladesh for the first time is organising a national training programme on chemical incident preparedness for hospitals on 22-24 July 2019 in Dhaka. A good number of physicians, nurses, and hospital administrators from all over the country would be provided training to equip them for their efficiently and effectively playing a pivotal role in the aftermath of any chemical disaster. We would like to express

gratitude to the Secretariat for its extending support to Bangladesh National Authority in this regard.

Bangladesh would like to highlight once again that unless we invest, well in advance, in the capacity building process with knowledge and tools to deter non-proliferation and re-emergence of the chemical weapons, the developing world would run the risk of becoming increasingly vulnerable in their sincere efforts to fully comply with the Convention.

We would, therefore, like to propose that the Secretariat should take sincere and proactive efforts, without any further delay, to arrange funded internship and JPO programmes for candidates from the developing States Parties to contribute to the capacity building efforts of the States Parties and to make this organisation truly representative of all States Parties. We are hopeful that the Secretariat would be able to roll out an internship and JPO program that others will find a model to follow. And for that, you don't need to wait for any, so called, UN review to be completed. Rather you can offer the United Nations and other international organisation a template to follow.

Coming from a country where empowerment of women is a globally acknowledged State Policy, for myself, being a fellow Gender Champion, this is a reason to celebrate. However, I would also like to add that gender balance and geographical balance are like two legs to make the OPCW fit for purpose of implementing the Convention. Without similar progress in the spheres of geographical diversity, we run the risk of remaining handicapped. At a time, when we are approaching post-destruction phase, we need to see the OPCW sprinting ahead, not limping with one leg and thereby falling far behind the goal, we set for ourselves.

Our resolve to achieve SDGs, where we set the goals for the world as a whole, is also an acknowledgement of the fact that the world is a highly unequal place; and emphasise the need for goals being achieved by all groups of individuals. I would, humbly, like to seek attention of all States Parties, North or South, to this phenomenon of inequality and your sincere pursuit to understand us, the developing world, putting yourself into our proverbial shoes.

If you do so, you will see, for us, in the developing world, it is not charity, but justice, is what we need the most. And justice is not difficult to deliver unless you wish to nurture the status quo.

I ask that this statement be circulated as an official document of this Ninety-First Session of the Council.

I thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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