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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-SECOND 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,

I take the privilege 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 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.

As an original signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”), Bangladesh believes that only the States Parties’ unflinching commitment to the Convention, in letter and spirit, can make the world more secure from the curse of chemical weapons. It is our firm conviction that a culture of consensus among us serves the best in our quest for chemical disarmament and preventing re-emergence of chemical weapons.

We would also like to register our gratitude, once again, to Ambassador I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja of Indonesia and Ambassador Agustín Vásquez Gómez of El Salvador for their hard work and dedicated efforts as co-facilitators. We are hopeful their leadership will surely bring the outcome that we all expect to meet the object and purpose of the Convention.

All our good works related to this Convention, no doubt, aimed not only at consolidation of peace, it will also pave the way for development to sustainable development through various means, such as, capacity building and institutional development. Every dollar spent on Article XI activities, for example, will surely have higher societal rate of return. Common



sense would therefore bound us to ask, why would we waste our time, resources and more importantly, our mutual goodwill through indulging into debates on issues that will push us part than brining us together?

As we are eagerly looking at 2023 for the Convention's entry into post-destruction phase, we would urge our new Facilitator, Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the OPCW, Ambassador Gladys Marithza Ruíz Sánchez de Vielman, for reinvigorated effort for the universality of the Convention. Unless we take care of the chemical weapons in every corner of this world, the object and purpose of the Convention shall remain far from complete. This is why we also wish to acknowledge development in the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs) of Japan in China and hope for the sustained attention to meet the goal of destructing the ACWs well before the Convention enters into the post-destruction phase.

Leading to this phase, we would like to see more resources for the promotion of peaceful use of chemistry for the well-being of humanity. We, therefore, strongly support the Africa Programme and would like to see more efforts and resources for the programme. We would also urge the attention of the Technical Secretariat ("the Secretariat") and the developed countries for more reinvigorated laboratory twinning programme. Our appeal for a twinning partner is still waiting for a response from any generous State Party as we speak.

We also like to express our support for the lab projects in Africa and GRULAC and would like to see similar attention paid to the crowded part of Asia.

Although our call for gender and geographical diversity showing some signs of progress, we would like to seek this august body's immediate decisions for launching a trust fund for interns and JPOs without any further delay. Should this Organisation truly wish to practice what it preaches i.e. to maintain fairness and equality, we wonder why the Secretariat is still shying itself from creating such a fund yet?

Bangladesh reiterates the importance of assistance and protection. I would like to happily inform this august body that Bangladesh for the first time organised a very successful 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 were 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 our gratitude to the Secretariat for its extending support to Bangladesh National Authority in this regard.

Before I conclude, allow me to draw your attention to the United Nations Secretary General António Guterres' 2018 report titled "SECURING OUR COMMON FUTURE: An Agenda for Disarmament". The UN Secretary-General stated that, I quote:

with more than one eighth of the world's gross product spent in 2017 on containing all forms of violence and with global military expenditures at its highest level since the fall of the Berlin Wall. New weapon technologies are increasing risks, including from the ability of non-State actors to carry out attacks across international boundaries. In many recent conflicts, the laws of humanity have been disregarded and prohibited weapons, such as chemical munitions, have returned to the battle field.

If nations fail to honour their existing commitments, they will not only put the entire disarmament and arms control regime at risk, but also damage the mechanisms designed to defuse tensions and foster dialogue on sensitive security issues.

The existential threat that the chemical weapons pose to humanity must motivate us to accomplish new and decisive action leading to their total elimination. We owe this to the victims of chemical weapons, to our planet and to the humanity.

Let me conclude by quoting Secretary-General Guterres again. Urging all to pursue disarmament, Guterres posed a simple question in one of his statements: “do the leaders of the nuclear powers agree with Reagan and Gorbachev that nuclear war by definition cannot be won, and therefore must not be fought?” Almost the same conclusion could be drawn on chemical weapons, if we truly remain committed to the tenets of humanity and recall the trauma and pains that we allowed to unleash on all the victims from Ieper, Halabja, Sardasht, and Ghouta, we would surely remain united in our resolve to our promise of “never again” to the chemical weapons. We urge all, once again, to join this call to preserve humanity’s only disarmament treaty eliminating an entire class of WMD.

There are moments in history when individual and collective courage and conscience come together to change the course of events. I hope this Council, and ultimately this august body of disarmament, the OPCW, will help set our world on a path towards sustainable peace and security for all.

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

I thank you.

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