



**Islamic Republic of Iran
Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

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**Statement by
H.E. Dr. Gholamhossein Dehghani
Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs**

**At the 24th Session of
the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention**

The Hague - 25 November 2019

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, on your well-deserved election as Chairperson of the Conference of the States Parties. I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support. We are grateful to Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias for his efforts and for his comprehensive statement. My delegation would also like to associate itself with the statement delivered by distinguished representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Members of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and China.

Mr. Chairperson,

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

The Convention is a collective achievement of 20th century, very much valued by the international community. However, the very purpose of the Convention, namely the elimination of chemical weapons, yet to be realized, due to blatant failure by the sole Possessor State Party, the United States of America. Besides, the prospect for successful implementation of the Convention is also at risk through, *inter alia*, heavy blow to multilateralism by the US undermining the consensus principle; selective approach towards implementation of provisions of the Convention; non-compliance of some Member States with the provisions of Article XI; pending universality of the Convention; uncertainty around implementation of Article X and efforts to engage the organization with the issues beyond the scope of the Convention, a good example of which is imposing "attribution" in the case of the Syrian Arab Republic.

I will try to focus very briefly on some of the above-mentioned challenges facing this Organization:

- 1) It is obvious that existence of a single chemical weapon is a threat to international peace and security. Accordingly, all efforts shall be made by the United States and Technical Secretariat to ensure that the remaining chemical weapons are destroyed under close monitoring of OPCW at the earliest but not later than specified deadline.
- 2) In the post "complete destruction" era, OPCW should be mobilized in accordance with its mandate. To that end, we should intensify our work and prepare necessary grounds to respond to challenges ahead.
- 3) Thirty-two years after chemical attack by Saddam in the City of Sardasht in Iran, and twenty-two years since entering into force of the CWC, questions still exist on "how far the legitimate expectations of the victims of chemical weapons have been responded by the Convention and the States Parties"? Reports of the Technical Secretariat on the status of the implementation of the Article X explain one side of the story. The other side of the story is more tragic: brutal unilateral sanctions by the United States denying access by the victims to drugs, medication and other critical needs. This has been exacerbated by economically-motivated compliance of some countries with these sanctions. The inhumane sanctions shall be opposed by the international community in particular the Members of this Organization as a flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law, hence a crime against humanity.

We take positive note of Director General's intention to exercise its good offices to liaise with States Parties and certain pharmaceutical industries to assist CW victims. We also acknowledge the establishment of "Trust Fund of the International Support Network for Victims" and call on States Parties in a position to do so to contribute to the Fund. We are of the view that implementation of Article X shall not be limited

to preparedness and protection, but it shall also assist victims of chemical weapons and enhance the humanitarian aims of the network.

- 4) As the Convention's balance of rights and obligations of the States Parties is crucial for its implementation, the non-selective approach to implementation of provisions of the Convention is essential for its sustainability in the future. It is a matter of serious concern that despite undisputable obligations under Article XI and several decisions made by PMOs (Policy-making Organs), the United States by resorting to "economic terrorism" through taking politically motivated unilateral coercive measures, with extraterritorial effects, continues to gravely violate its obligations under the Convention. Continued and systematic denial of transfer of materials, equipment and technologies to States Parties for peaceful purposes, including those needed for local pharmaceutical industries, is a clear violation of the provisions of the Convention.

It is essential, as has been the case for other provisions, to have a roadmap for effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI, a major pillar of the Convention. The long-standing position of developing countries, an envisaged "Cooperation Committee", needs to be seriously considered by policy making organs with a view to facilitating exchange of material, equipment and technology, addressing transfer's obstacles or denials for the activities not prohibited under the Convention, and developing and supporting the above-mentioned roadmap.

- 5) It is a matter of serious concern that in recent years, non-consensual decisions have been taken by Executive Council and the CSPs on several important issues. This has disappointedly divided States Parties and adversely affected prospects for sound implementation of the Convention and its effectiveness as well. We should be prepared to engage constructively and in

good faith to resolve issues that have divided us and make all efforts to sustain integrity of decisions taken by PMO's. There is also a dire need to ensure that OPCW decisions, particularly those taken by the Executive Council, are apolitical and in full compliance with the Convention.

- 6) The universality of the Convention is fundamentally important for the efficiency of the OPCW. This is mostly hostage to the obstinate refusal of Israel to accede to the Convention. All efforts shall be made to force this regime, which possesses high WMDs , to join the CWC unconditionally and without further delay.

Mr. Chairperson,

Distinguished delegates,

As the major victim of chemical weapons in twentieth century, the Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to the CWC and OPCW as regards maintaining international peace and security. We are committed to collective efforts aimed at strengthening the Convention in its entirety.

To conclude, as we approach the "Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare" (30th of November), allow me to pay tribute to all victims of chemical weapons. I invite all distinguished colleagues to visit the Exhibition outside this Assembly Hall and meet a group of Iranian victims as well as the victims of the city of Halabja. This will help us to better understand why OPCW commitment to the total elimination of the chemical weapons and eradication of the menace of this inhumane weapon is so crucial for humanity and for promoting peace, security and multilateralism.

I thank you for your attention.