



Mr. Chairperson,  
Mr. Director-General,  
Distinguished ambassadors and delegates,

Mr. Chairperson,

Permit me to begin by extending to you warm felicitations on assuming the Chairmanship of the 24th Session of the Conference of the States Parties. My delegation is confident that under your able leadership, the Conference will be guided to a successful conclusion. Please be assured of the full cooperation of my delegation.

I would like to extend my delegation's appreciation to Ambassador Yun-Young Lee for his excellent work as the Chair of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Conference of the States Parties and since he is leaving The Hague soon, we wish him the very best for the future.

My delegation appreciates the continued efforts made by the Technical Secretariat under the leadership of Director-General Ambassador Fernando Arias, often in challenging circumstances, towards implementation of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

My delegation would like to congratulate Dr Robert Mikulak, Mr Cheng Tang, and the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), for being the joint recipients of the 2019 OPCW-The Hague Award.

India endorses and associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of NAM States Parties to the Convention and China.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Chemical Weapons Convention is a unique, non-discriminatory disarmament instrument and a model for elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. As a result of the Convention, more than 97% of chemical weapon stockpiles declared by possessor states have been eliminated. The Convention now covers 98% of the global population. Achievement of a comprehensive and verifiable ban on chemical weapons

hinges on full universality of the Convention. Universality is critical to preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons and its access by non-State actors. We call upon remaining States that are not Parties to the Convention to consider acceding to the Convention at the earliest. We also hope all remaining declared chemical weapons stockpiles will be soon destroyed.

Mr. Chairperson,

As a founding member State of the OPCW, India is committed to achieving the aims of the Convention. Full and effective implementation of Article VII by all States Parties is important in order to achieve universal adherence to the Convention and to guard against the possible use of toxic chemicals by non-State actors. To this end, I am happy to share that Indian experts will soon visit Afghanistan as part of on-going cooperation between the two national authorities, under the OPCW National Authority Mentorship/Partnership Programme. Indian authorities have already shared knowledge, skills and experience with Afghan authorities in the first round of the programme which was held in New Delhi from April 29 to May 03, 2019.

Mr. Chairperson,

Any use of chemical weapons is in complete disregard of humanity, reprehensible and contrary to the provisions of the Convention as well as acceptable international legal norms. We must work together to strengthen the universal norm against chemical weapons as well as the broader non-proliferation regime.

We condemn the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anybody, and under any circumstances. All perpetrators of such abhorrent acts must be held accountable. At the same time, all investigations into alleged use of chemical weapons should be impartial, objective and conducted strictly in accordance with the Convention. The impartiality and integrity of the OPCW should be preserved under all circumstances.

Mr. Chairperson,

India is happy to support the Joint Proposal by the US, Canada and the Netherlands and the modified proposal by the Russian Federation which seek to update Schedule 1 of the Annex on Chemicals to the Chemical Weapons Convention. These changes are an important step in addressing the new challenges that are emerging in an ever-changing global environment. My delegation appreciates the efforts of the sponsors of the Joint Proposal and the Russian Federation. We thank them and all others involved in negotiations on this subject for their spirit of compromise which will result in adoption of these proposals by consensus in this Session.

Mr. Chairperson,

India stands for the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI, as well as the promotion of peaceful uses of chemical technology and enhancing of international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited in the Convention. It is important that the OPCW programmes on promotion of chemical safety and security, capacity building, technical assistance and international cooperation are drawn up on a needs-based approach to achieve optimum results.

Mr. Chairperson,

We commend the leadership exhibited by the Chairman of the Executive Council, Ambassador Andrea Perugini and the tireless efforts of the Co-facilitators, Ambassador of Indonesia, I Gusti A. Wesaka Puja and Ambassador of El Salvador, Agustín Vásquez Gómez, in taking forward the NAM-China proposal to establish an Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) to identify and prioritise the implementation of items on which consensus is achievable amongst states parties. We appreciate the constructive approach adopted by all States Parties which has made possible a consensus on revitalising the overall facilitation framework and giving it a new impetus. We hope the initiative of the EC Chair to take up the topics identified in the

two documents facilitated by Ambassador Puja and Ambassador Gómez will promote full and effective implementation of all aspects of the Convention and retrieve some of the ground lost during the Fourth Review Conference in 2018 when overall consensus eluded us despite agreement on many issues.

Mr. Chairperson,

This Conference is tasked with the responsibility to consider and adopt the 2020 Programme and Budget of the OPCW which has been transmitted by the Executive Council by a majority vote. It is unfortunate that there was no consensus in the Executive Council on this budget. The omnibus budget is not only a departure from past practice but also deprives States Parties of the opportunity to express their views on specific elements of the Budget.

The budget proposal also contains financial provisions for the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) set up to implement the decision by the special CSP in June 2018 on Attribution Mechanism. I reiterate India's principled opposition to the Attribution Mechanism due to the manner in which it was set up and in disregard of India's concerns on the substance as well as the process.

Mr. Chairperson,

India supports adherence to the rules and procedures and established practices under the framework of the Convention, so as to preserve its integrity. States Parties should desist from politicisation of the OPCW and refrain from raising extraneous matters that divert us from our core objectives of achieving disarmament and non-proliferation of chemical weapons.

My delegation is willing to engage constructively with all States Parties for the success of this Conference, and remains willing and open to discussions to find ways and means to strengthen the Convention and its effective implementation, within the framework of the Convention.

I request that this statement be considered an official document of this Conference and posted on the external server and the public website.

I thank you.

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