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MALAYSIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR AHMAD NAZRI YUSOF
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Thank you Mr Chairperson, Mr Director-General, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by congratulating His Excellency Ambassador Krassimir Kostov, the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the OPCW, on his election as the Chairperson of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. On the same note, my delegation wishes to thank His Excellency Ambassador Yun-young Lee, for his immense contribution during his stewardship of the Twenty-Third Session of the Conference.

Our appreciation goes to the Director-General, His Excellency Ambassador Fernando Arias, for his comprehensive report yesterday, and to the Technical Secretariat for the dedication and commitment that they have demonstrated throughout the year.

Malaysia associates itself with the statement delivered by His Excellency Mr Jafar Huseynzada, of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

The year 2013 was a high point for the OPCW, as the Organisation was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, and the Syrian Arab Republic had acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention. With less than 20% of all declared chemical weapons stockpiles remaining at that point, we started deliberating on the new roles the OPCW should undertake to remain relevant.

Through this period of evolution, we watched the OPCW grow, determined to defy the odds, in the pursuit of a world free of chemical weapons. We are pleased with the Director-General's report to the last Executive Council meeting confirming that 97.27% of declared Category 1 chemical weapons have been destroyed as at 31 August 2019.

The dynamically evolving nature of issues and challenges requires the continuous strengthening of the Convention and the OPCW. In this regard, Malaysia welcomes the proposals to add new families of nerve agents to the Annex on Chemicals. We are pleased by Russia's flexibility in modifying its technical change proposal, and hope that such flexibility can be manifested by all States Parties on other issues within the framework of the Convention. We look forward to the parallel adoption of both the Russian proposal as well as the joint proposal by Canada, the Netherlands, and the United States by this Conference.



We also note the adoption of decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 at the Fourth Special Conference of States Parties to the Convention in June 2018, which assigns the OPCW the mandate to attribute responsibility to the perpetrators of chemical weapons incidents. While we recognise the decision as an attempt to break the deadlock on holding perpetrators of chemical weapons incidents accountable, we regret that the decision was forced through with unwarranted haste and has since become a source of contention within the OPCW.

In this regard, a forward-looking approach is much needed to address this issue. Malaysia strongly believes that the now fully-operational attribution mechanism must be accountable to the policy-making organs of the OPCW and function in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. We hope that the ensuing deliberation of the first report by the Identification and Investigation Team (IIT) at the next Executive Council meeting in March 2020 will be conducted in the most objective, inclusive, and non-discriminatory manner.

Malaysia also looks forward to the outcome of the investigation on the unauthorised disclosure of an internal document related to the Fact-Finding Mission in Douma. This untoward leakage is detrimental to the sanctity of the Organisation and proper measures must be undertaken to prevent any future breach of confidentiality or violation of obligations concerning the protection of confidential information.

We also take note of the reports by the Declaration Assessment Team and hope that the framework of the Structured Dialogue will be able to resolve, among other things, the identified gaps and inconsistencies in the declaration made by the Syrian Arab Republic.

Malaysia encourages innovation to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the OPCW. That notwithstanding, we reaffirm the need for new mechanisms to be introduced in the Organisation, to receive broad support from States Parties, and to ensure effective implementation of the Convention.

In this regard, we welcome the decision of the Executive Council to transition from an annual programme and budget cycle to a biennial one. We also commend efforts by the Secretariat to ensure that the draft programme and budget remains at zero nominal growth.

We note the new simplified approach on the draft decision on the 2020 programme and budget introduced by the Secretariat this year. Although the draft programme and budget maintains the 2019 level of assessed contributions, it has regrettably not been well received by some States Parties due to concerns over its unprecedented consolidated format. It is our hope that concerns with regard to the 2020 programme and budget are addressed in the most amicable manner.

Malaysia is pleased with the positive development in the OPCW's workforce management, particularly the increase in female representation in the Organisation's top structure. We also believe that more could be done to improve geographical representation within the Organisation, one of which is by bringing and nurturing qualified and talented individuals from developing States for the Internship and Junior Professional Officers Programmes.

Malaysia strongly believes that universality and full implementation of the Convention will not be possible as long as there are States that remain outside of the Convention. It is our strong desire that the accession of five new States Parties since 2013 would encourage the remaining States not Party to ratify or accede to the Convention without further delay.

It is also imperative that the Convention remains relevant in addressing the rapid advances in science and technology. The dual nature of chemistry and chemical technology is a challenge that requires due attention. In this regard, Malaysia expresses its support for the introduction of the draft decision on the use of central nervous system (CNS)-acting chemicals for law enforcement purposes. We wish to reaffirm that Malaysia does not produce, stockpile, or use CNS-acting chemicals for riot control purposes. In this regard, we look forward to formal discussions on this matter.

Consensus should be the bedrock of every multilateral organisation, especially in a technical organisation such as the OPCW. It is regrettable that consensus within our Organisation has been steadily eroding in recent years.

We now have a greater tendency to resort to voting at any given chance, especially when we are faced with decision fatigue. In the pursuit of getting things done, we sacrificed the value of constructive engagement, which has resulted in discord. As the generally accepted wisdom of humankind says that majority is always right, we oftentimes forget that the minority could be rarely wrong.

None of us here should lose hope over the future of our Organisation. Therefore, the onus falls upon us to engage constructively with one another, cultivate the culture of dialogue and seek for common ground for consensus to come about.

In conclusion, we would like to express our appreciation for the Technical Secretariat for its assistance in ensuring that programmes hosted by in Malaysia in 2019, such as the Chemical Incident Preparedness for Hospitals (HOSPREP), the Advanced Course on Chemical Emergency Response for First Responders from Asia Region, and the Workshop on the Role of Legislation in Addressing Threats arising from Non-State Actors, were successfully implemented.

We hope that there will be more collaboration in the future for capacity-building development for Malaysians and participants from neighbouring countries to achieve the required international competency and professionalism in handling chemical security and threats. We hope that the OPCW will continuously engage Malaysia to enable us to learn and share, and consequently integrate our response models regionally to handle future chemical security and threats.

May I request this statement be circulated as an official document and be posted on the OPCW website and external server.

Thank you.

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