

REPUBLIC OF INDIA

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR VENU RAJAMONY

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF REPUBLIC OF INDIA TO THE OPCW

AT THE NINETY-THIRD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Director-General,
Distinguish Ambassadors,
Distinguished Delegates,

It is my pleasure to welcome you back as the Chair of the Executive Council. We are grateful to you for your leadership not just of the previous sessions but also in the inter-sessional period. We commend you in particular for the outreach conducted by you to various delegations prior to this session. My delegation is confident that you will very ably steer the 93rd session of this Council to a successful conclusion. I assure you of the full cooperation and support of my delegation at all times.

I thank the Director-General for his comprehensive opening statement and commend the Director General for his sincere and dedicated efforts to advance the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The hard work of the Technical Secretariat, under the leadership of the Director-General, deserves the highest of praise.

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,

It was decided at the 24th Conference of States Parties to amend the schedules of Chemicals listed in the Convention. This was a historic move since States Parties were amending the Convention for the first time since its entry into force. The decision reflected the concern of States Parties that the Convention adapts to new challenges and remaining current at all times. I am happy to inform that, in order to give effect to their Decision, India has already commenced work to incorporate required changes to its national legislation. We are confident of completing this process before June 7, 2020, as per the timeline laid out in Article XV of the CWC.

Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation is pleased to draw the attention of all delegations to a Course on Analytical Skills Development, hosted by India in collaboration with the Technical Secretariat, at the Indian Institute of Chemical Technology, Hyderabad from November 25 to December 6, 2019. Nineteen participants from eighteen countries of Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America region attended the Course. We were satisfied with the success of the Course as well as our collaboration with the OPCW. India will continue to contribute towards all efforts to promote the peaceful uses of chemical technology and enhancing international cooperation in this field.

Mr. Chairperson,

India believes that the use of Chemical Weapons anywhere and at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances is unacceptable. It attaches great importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention and believes that all States Parties must collectively strive to implement the provisions of the CWC.

Mr. Chairperson,

We have taken note of the various reports of the Director-General on progress in the destruction of remaining chemical weapons stockpiles. It is important that progress in the destruction of the remaining chemical weapons stockpiles is accelerated so as to achieve complete destruction of all chemical weapons stockpiles before the scheduled timeline. We believe that there must be effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

Full universality of the Convention is critical to achieving a comprehensive, verifiable ban on chemical weapons. We call upon the remaining States that are not Parties to the Convention, to consider acceding to the Convention at the earliest.

Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation shares the concern over allegations and incidents of use of chemical weapons, including by non-state actors in different parts of the world. We must prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons and ensure that non-State actors do not gain access to them. Investigation into alleged use of chemical weapons in any part of the world, including by non-State actors should be impartial, timely, objective and strictly in accordance with the Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

We look forward to early resolution of all outstanding issues pertaining to the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical dossier. We urge the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic to continue their consultations in above regard.

Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation reiterates that the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) must at all times remain accountable to the EC and function in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. The continuing stalemate on the issue calls for exploring ways to address concerns on the IIT shared by a large number of States Parties and to uphold the principles of the Convention. Let me reiterate the need for States Parties to engage in a constructive dialogue on this issue and strive to find common ground.

Mr. Chairperson,

We note the Report of the Investigation into Possible Breaches of Confidentiality initiated by the Director-General in July 2019 and the remedial measures proposed in the Report. We urge the Director General to proceed on the matter in such a manner that the integrity and credibility of the OPCW and its mechanisms are preserved at all times.

Mr. Chairperson,

My delegation is extremely happy with the progress achieved within the consultation process on Organizational and Governance issues. We commend Ambassador of Indonesia, I Gusti A. Wesaka Puja and Ambassador of El Salvador, Agustín Vásquez Gómez for their tireless efforts to promote a consensus in the above regard. We are very happy to note that they have identified a convergence of views on a large number of issues. They have also recommended further discussions on certain topics and suggested that consultations continue in the next inter-sessional period under the leadership of Ambassador Mathew Neuhaus of Australia and Ambassador Laura Dupuy of Uruguay. My delegation welcomes this proposal and would like to indicate that we think Ambassador Mathew Neuhaus and Ambassador Laura Dupuy are an excellent choice to lead the process further. It is important to build on the progress achieved so far. India is happy to contribute its utmost in this regard.

Mr. Chairperson,

India has always emphasized the importance of consensus and the need for all decisions to be taken by the States Parties in consultation with each other. My

delegation considers that decisions which have far-reaching implications should be thoroughly discussed to achieve consensus amongst States Parties.

We urge States Parties to continue to discuss and work together on the proposal to amend the Rules of Procedure of the OPCW Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters. A collective and consensual approach would be the best way forward on this matter. As regards the draft decision on Aerosolized Use of Central Nervous System-Acting Chemicals, it is our view that Central Nervous System-Acting Chemicals do not fall within the purview of the Convention. We urge further discussions and deliberation on the matter keeping in mind the limitations imposed by the Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

I conclude requesting that this Statement be circulated as an official document of this session and posted on the external server and the public website of the OPCW.

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