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INDIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR VENU RAJAMONY
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

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

At the outset, Mr Chairperson, I extend to you, on behalf of my delegation and on my personal behalf, heartiest facilitations on assuming the Chair of the Executive Council. The session is being convened under challenging circumstances posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenges notwithstanding, I am sure the session will achieve its objectives under your able leadership. I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support. My delegation commends the Director-General for leading the Technical Secretariat through these difficult times.

India associates itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Fikrat Akhundov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of NAM States Parties to the Convention and China.

India has always attached high importance to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which embodies the global norm against the use of chemical weapons, and stands for its full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation. India has also extended its full support to the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat. We are close to achieving the objective of universal adherence to the CWC, which is critical to achieving a universal, comprehensive, verifiable non-proliferation of chemical weapons. We urge the remaining States that are not Parties to the Convention to consider acceding to the Convention at the earliest.

My delegation has taken note of the reports of the Director-General on progress in the destruction of remaining chemical weapons stockpiles. It is important that the process of destruction is completed before the scheduled timeline to ensure complete elimination of chemical weapons.

We have taken note of the reports of the Director-General on Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme. We have consistently urged and encouraged active engagement between the Syrian Arab Republic and the OPCW to resolve all outstanding issues concerning Syria's initial declaration and the subsequent amendments. We welcome and encourage cooperation between the Syrian Arab Republic and the



Technical Secretariat and hope that the resumption of the high-level consultation, currently affected by COVID-19, would address all outstanding issues.

I take this opportunity to once again state India's consistent position that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anybody, under any circumstances, cannot be justified, and the perpetrators must be held accountable.

India remains fully committed to non-proliferation of chemical weapons. We remain firmly opposed to the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone.

We have seen the first report of the IIT on incidents in Ltamenah, Syria. India has consistently underlined the need for impartial and objective investigation into any act of use of chemical weapons, following scrupulously, the provisions of the Convention, the procedures embedded within it and in conformity with the delicate balance of power and responsibility enshrined under it to establish the facts and reach evidence-based conclusions.

As a founding member of the Chemical Weapons Convention, India has always contributed to and supported full and effective implementation of the Convention. India remains committed to working together with the States Parties to the CWC to strengthen it and ensure its effective implementation.

The consultation process on organisational and governance issues during the inter-sessional period have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are confident that the consultation process would advance efficaciously under the able leadership of Ambassador Mathew Neuhaus of Australia and Ambassador Laura Dupuy of Uruguay.

I conclude with the request 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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