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ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DR. ALIREZA KAZEMI ABADI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO
THE OPCW AT THE NINETY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, I would like to welcome you back, Ambassador Agustín Vázquez Gómez of El Salvador as the Chairperson of the Executive Council. My delegation assures you of its full cooperation to tackle the issues under the current COVID-19 situation in the last Executive Council session of this year.

I would like to thank the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, for his comprehensive report delivered in this session and wish to commend him and the Technical Secretariat for the work done by them.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is associated with the statement delivered by Ambassador Fikrat Akhundov, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the OPCW on behalf of the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

The long aspiration of the international community realised upon the conclusion of the Chemical Weapons Convention in the twentieth century, ensuring that another category of weapons of mass destruction would be eliminated entirely upon the entry into force of the Convention. The fundamental objective of the Convention to eliminate all chemical weapons remains yet to be realised.

There is no doubt that the total destruction remains a key concern of the international community due to the fact that the only remaining possessor State Party has not yet completed its destruction commitments. It is of fundamental importance that the only remaining possessor State Party accelerate the process of destruction of its chemical weapons stockpiles and take all-out measures to complete destruction before the second scheduled timeline to comply fully with the decisions taken by the policy-making organs (PMOs).



There have been negative developments in the last couple of years on the efforts to strengthen the Convention. It is a matter of regret that short-term political interests of certain corners continue to overshadow our work and undermine the OPCW. Unsubstantiated allegations on the States Parties, ultra vires acts by the Organisation, politicisation of the work of technical and/or advisory bodies, unilateral actions versus collective decisions etc., are just examples of these negative developments.

The last session of the Council was pushed, by a few countries, for a decision to be taken by vote against a State Party. This decision does not correspond to realities on the ground. It is also a matter of serious concern that despite significant measures taken by the Syrian Arab Republic to destroy all its 27 chemical weapons production facilities and continuing cooperation with the Technical Secretariat, the politically-motivated decision entitled “Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic” (EC-94/DEC.2, dated 9 July 2020) was adopted in the Ninety-Fourth Council Session. This counter-productive decision has completely disregarded, so far, 82 monthly reports submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic to the OPCW, several rounds of bilateral meetings between the Syrian authorities and the Technical Secretariat, a considerable amount of information provided by Syria, and visits and other activities done in constant cooperation of the Syrian authorities with the Technical Secretariat.

The decision was not balanced and was mostly based on the first report of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) whose mandate, i.e. the so-called “attribution”, has not been mentioned either explicitly or implicitly in the Chemical Weapons Convention and is also inconsistent with the Convention. The IIT report is based upon unreliable open sources, invalid information, and the chain of custody, which has not been conducted appropriately in the work of the IIT.

This destructive and unproductive trend supported by certain States Parties and started from the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties on 26 June 2018 can tarnish the credit and reputation of this Organisation in the future. Having neglected many factors involved in the territory of Syria, facing with a most extraordinary situation in that country and losing sight of the facts, such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the missions and activities related to Syria, the decision, especially its fifth paragraph, by setting an artificial and unfair 90-day deadline, has complicated the situation and forced the Syrian Arab Republic in a position to take the responsibility for incidents and activities that were not under its control.

It is commendable that the Syrian Arab Republic despite all the false allegations and accusations, and the adoption of politicised decisions in the OPCW is still fully cooperating with the Technical Secretariat. It should also be noted that while the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is making every effort to have an effective cooperation with the Technical Secretariat, the terrorist groups in Syria continue their attacks against unarmed civilians to make the security situation extremely dangerous.

Therefore, in order to find a proper solution, it is necessary to refrain from taking any action that would complicate the Syrian chemical dossier.

Upon the conclusion of the Chemical Weapons Convention, States Parties agreed to establish an organisation mandated to implement the Convention in accordance with the constituencies agreed upon. The Convention sets full ranges of scenarios upon which States Parties might agree on certain proposals to strengthen the Convention in full conformity with its provisions.

In this regard, we note the draft decision EC-92/DEC/CRP.9/Rev.3 entitled “Understanding Regarding the Aerosolized Use of Central Nervous System-Acting Chemicals for Law Enforcement Purposes”.

This draft decision regretfully suffers from technical ambiguity and legal uncertainty. Nevertheless, during the past decade, the ongoing progress of decision-making has triggered so rapid, scattered decisions collection through unprecedented polarised voting, which undermines the credibility and integrity of this solemn technical body. Furthermore, the recent decisions analysis shows that the concurrence of rapid politicisation and slow deliberation have been creating favourable conditions for the upswing of hasty, technically-related decisions. It is obvious that the line between technical and political matters has become blurred. What is most striking in this technical body is the recognition and incorporation of this technical turmoil into the representation of reaching a common understanding without compromising the integrity of the Convention in its entirety.

We are glad to inform that a joint working paper on the technical ambiguity and legal uncertainty in the draft decision was presented by the People’s Republic of China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Syrian Arab Republic, which outlines the principled position of these States Parties on central nervous system(CNS)-acting chemicals.

We hope that this session of the Council provides an opportunity to discuss further all proposals and develop a common understanding on the next step. To that end, we are prepared to engage in a structural discussion to address all technical and legal aspects of CNS-acting chemicals, taking into account all views of States Parties. We underline that any hasty decision on this very important subject would be counter-productive, as it would lead to division among States Parties and compromise the letter and spirit of the Convention. In this regard, we fully associate with the sentiment expressed by the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China on the need to continue dialogue in a comprehensive manner on this issue to achieve consensus which is important.

The full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI, a fundamental pillar of the Convention, yet remains to be realised. It is unfortunate that since the EIF of this instrument, no real progress has been achieved on the implementation of promotional and regulatory aspects of the provisions of Article XI. Non-compliance of States Parties shall not only be assessed in light of the prohibitions of the Convention, but it shall be considered objectively through all provisions of the Convention including Article XI. In this regard, the long-standing principled position of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China, as expressed in numerous occasions and outlined in its proposal RC-3/NAT.1, shall thoroughly be discussed. The need for an action plan for the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI has been consistently expressed by the Group. Systematic denial by certain countries to engage constructively on this proposal shall be ceased.

Though it is clear that the Technical Secretariat’s activities are seriously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, we are not satisfied that the budget allocated to the International Cooperation and Assistance Programme in the Draft Budget and Programme for the 2021, compared to the same one in the previous year has decreased with respect to some other Programmes.

It should be underlined that more than 100,000 victims of chemical weapons in my country, who are now under unlawful unilateral sanctions, are in urgent need of specific medicaments and treatment. We strongly reject imposing discriminatory restrictions and particularly unilateral sanctions against Member States of this Organisation, which directly affects the health and medication of the victims of chemical weapons, as well as the development of developing countries in the field of chemical activities for peaceful purposes.

The systematic unilateral sanctions also have, directly or indirectly, such an unavoidable impact upon some of the States Parties that make it difficult for them to meet all their obligations under the Convention. These unilateral coercive measures have deprived the victims of chemical weapons to have access to essential medicines. This inhumane action has increased the physical and mental suffering of the victims more than ever, especially when the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this situation. We now need a tangible measure to be taken by the Organisation to alleviate the suffering of the victims of chemical weapons. The international community highly expects that we act together in a responsible manner to assist those who are in dire need. To this end, in line with the request of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China, we look forward to the good offices of the Director-General to assist the chemical weapons victims in whatever ways possible.

While considerable progress has been achieved in the universality of the Convention, still this major instrument on weapons of mass destruction (WMD) fails to achieve full universality, as recalled by international community. We shall make all efforts necessary to ensure that normative rules of the Convention would be in place, and these rules have been upheld by all without exception. It is a matter of serious concern that the Israel regime, with a huge number of stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, systematically denies to accede to WMD instruments. In this regard, my delegation hereby strongly calls on the few remaining outsiders to accede to the Convention without further delay and preconditions. We also emphasise that after two decades of the implementation of the Convention, the States not Party should not enjoy the advantages and benefits it offers to States Parties.

Time and again, as it has been said in several occasions, the recent non-consensual decisions shall not become a practice in the Organisation, where States Parties are committed to consulting and cooperating with each other to achieve our common objectives enshrined in the Convention. We shall not push to divide States Parties further on issues that might ultimately compromise the objectives of the Convention. We would reach our final destiny “only and if” States Parties are committed to act together and ensure the integrity of decisions, and uphold the credibility of the OPCW.

In conclusion, I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session and posted on the both the OPCW public and external website.

Thank you.

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