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BANGLADESH

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR M. RIAZ HAMIDULLAH
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BANGLADESH TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Chairperson of the Executive Council, Ambassador Agustín Vásquez Gómez,
Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias,
Deputy Director-General, Ambassador Odette Melono,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, I welcome Ambassador Gómez as the Chairperson of the Executive Council. My delegation is confident that, with your wisdom and leadership, the deliberations at this session will come to a successful conclusion.

Allow me also to commend the Director-General for his comprehensive statement. Also, the Vice-Chairpersons for their respective reports presented at this session. The Director-General and his team in the Technical Secretariat deserve appreciation for their earnest efforts to ensure full and effective implementation of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”).

The Bangladeshi delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ambassador Fikrat Akhundov, on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Convention and China.

We meet at a time faced with an unprecedented global challenge, posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic’s toll on human lives varies from country to country, its telling effect on our economies and societies is universal. Bangladesh would, therefore, call for robust international cooperation to contain the pandemic and recover from its fallouts, especially by exchanging science, technology, innovation, information, and best practices.

Bangladesh would reaffirm, Mr Chair, that the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as weapons anywhere, by anyone, anytime, and under any pretext or circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the provisions of the Convention and all norms of international law. We firmly believe, it is the States Parties’ unflinching commitment to the Convention that can secure our world from the curse of chemical weapons. We therefore urge all actors to uphold the Convention, under all circumstances.



Bangladesh considers the Convention a model treaty. The norm of “never again” is increasingly as relevant as the opportunity cost of wasteful practices like chemical weapons is almost all time high. We believe, a culture of consensus and spirit of cooperation among the States Parties is crucial in our quest for non-proliferation and prevention of the use or, re-emergence of chemical weapons, anywhere.

We are keen to see substantive progress of the Executive Council’s Chairperson-led coordination mechanism for revitalising the existing facilitations in the advancement of the objectives and purpose of the Convention. Bangladesh appreciates the sincere efforts made by Ambassador Neuhaus of Australia and Ambassador Dupuy Laserre of Uruguay as the new facilitators on organisational governance issues. We join all others to see tangible outcomes out of their efforts.

Bangladesh eagerly looks at 2023 for the Convention’s entry into the post-destruction phase. We acknowledge the progress made in the destruction of the chemical weapons stockpile in the United States, and the developments in the destruction of the abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs) of Japan in China. We hope for the sustained attention to meet the goal of destructing the stockpiles and the ACWs well before the Convention enters into the post-destruction phase.

It is also pertinent to consider our universal pledge to attain the SDGs. As we move to the post-destruction phase, Bangladesh would need more support in ensuring the peaceful use of chemistry for the well-being of our people, in the context of attaining the SDGs.

The Convention also calls for promotion of free trade in chemicals, and international cooperation and exchange of scientific and technical information in the field of chemical activities. It is important to enhance the economic and technological development of all States Parties. Bangladesh would like to underline the importance of the promotion of international cooperation, as mandated by the Convention, for the benefits of all States Parties. Let me again underscore: unless the low-income developing countries like Bangladesh are supported in capacity building with necessary knowledge and technology, it would remain a challenge for us to fully comply with the Convention.

We would urge the Technical Secretariat to effectively share the scientific development in the areas of chemistry and biology, particularly on the convergence of chemistry and biology and developments in related disciplines of knowledge and technology. Developing States Parties like ours need support in capacity building of relevant institutions, education and outreach to chemical industry, research and academia, students of chemistry, chemical engineering, and biochemistry at university level.

To the Technical Secretariat and the OECD countries, Bangladesh would emphasise on a robust laboratory twinning programme. This is to complement the capacity-building efforts of the States Parties like ours as our economies grow.

COVID-19 has hardly spared any entity. OPCW has been no exception. We are aware of the ways the pandemic has impacted the implementation of the Organisation’s Programme and Budget for 2020 and also the design for the next year. On a key aspect such as the Programme and Budget, particularly at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bangladesh would call for understanding and flexibility from all States Parties.

We value the Centre for Chemistry and Technology project. Bangladesh would reiterate its full support to the project. We warmly welcome the generous contribution of the host country, The Netherlands, and of a good many other States Parties. And, we would further like to appeal to others for their generous contribution to a just cause.

In our view, there should be gender balance and geographical diversity in staffing in the Technical Secretariat to reflect its true international character. I applaud the Director-General for his leadership in making progress in this regard, particularly ensuring gender parity at the Organisation's top structure. In a similar spirit, we would urge the Technical Secretariat to demonstrate its innovative quest to ensure geographical diversity as well. We do hope that the Technical Secretariat would be able to roll out pragmatic programmes, like scholarships for interns and junior professional officers from developing countries, to foster geographical diversity in the Organisation, as well as to contribute to the promotion of the peaceful use of chemistry in those countries.

As I conclude, let me touch upon the very necessity of applying our conscience to continue along the chosen path of the Convention towards a safer world for all of us. As I am in this 'City of Peace and Justice' for just three months now, let me commit to join my esteemed colleagues in the OPCW to serve to the cause of "never again".

I would request that this statement be circulated as an official series document of this Ninety-Fifth Session of the Executive Council.

I thank you.

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