

**Explanation of Vote by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the OPCW at the
96th Session of the Executive Council of the OPCW**

10 March 2021

Mr. Chairman

It is regrettable that today we lost another opportunity to bridge our differences. The vote on the draft decision on the CNSAC issue is yet another blow to the tradition of consensus in this organization. A vote on the draft decision whose title calls it an “understanding” represents a bizarre contradiction. Pakistan has abstained on the draft in restraint although a negative vote would have been justified given the lack of logic and goodwill which this vote signifies and the fact that it deals a severe blow to an otherwise reasonable proposition.

Pakistan was one of the first States Parties which supported the initiative of addressing the CNSAC and it continued to support it since 2008. We believe it is our obligation to take into consideration all the relevant matters which would potentially strengthen the Chemical Weapons Convention. However, it is imperative that we move ahead in unison. But this message appears to be fading away into oblivion. The substance of the CNSAC matter is well understood by us, however, a vote has only exaggerated the urgency of the matter and further vitiated the atmosphere. This does not stand to reason. More time for technical discussions which could accommodate genuine concerns of other States Parties was a reasonable call. Disarmament cannot progress through forced decisions. In fact, such steps more likely create the opposite effect. The only reason this organization has shown exemplary success has been the spirit of consensus. It is lamentable that since 2018 voting has come to be identified as a brute measure that creates the mirage of forward movement. This change of course will lead nowhere. It can only be continued at the expense of eroding and eventually losing the unqualified support that the OPCW has enjoyed over the years across the globe. We deplore this state of affairs that has no justification other than a narrow vision and short-term political gain.

Thank you.