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AZERBAIJAN

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBER STATES
OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT THAT ARE STATES PARTIES
TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION AND CHINA
DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR FIKRAT AKHUNDOV
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE
OPCW AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China (NAM States Parties to the Convention and China).

At the outset, we would like to welcome you, Ambassador José Antonio Zabalgaitia Trejo of Mexico as the Chairperson of the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties and express our confidence in your leadership to steer this Conference to a successful conclusion.

We also wish to take this opportunity to appreciate the Chairperson of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, Ambassador Krassimir Kostov of Bulgaria. We wish to thank the Director-General, H.E. Fernando Arias, for his comprehensive report. The Group conveys its appreciation for the OPCW staff for their dedication to the implementation of the Organisation's noble objectives.

The Non-Aligned Movement celebrates this year the 65th anniversary of the Bandung Conference and adoption of its founding principles, which stand at the core of the Movement and reflect its founding commitments and aspirations. We believe at the milieu of current challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, posed to the international community, the Bandung Principles have become even more relevant and important today. In this regard, we call for intensified international cooperation and concerted multilateral efforts to tackle the global challenges together, inter alia, by exchanging information, scientific knowledge, and best practices, as well as by ensuring equitable access to safe, affordable, quality vaccines, and medicines for COVID-19.



In these challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, the NAM States Parties to the Convention and China underscore the importance for the OPCW and all States Parties to continue the implementation of the Convention in a manner which would not impede its role in the economic and technological development of States Parties, especially in the fields of international cooperation and assistance.

While we stress that ensuring the full application of the Rules of Procedure of the OPCW in its entirety shall be strictly observed, at the same time we note with serious concern that COVID-19 has caused challenges for hosting the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. Whilst we take note of the exceptional nature of the modalities adopted for holding this Conference and emphasise the right of the States Parties in full conformity with the Rules of Procedure to follow and participate actively in its work without any discrimination, we emphasise that such modalities should be regarded as exceptional and not create any precedent for the future. Hence, upon the termination of these special circumstances arising from the risk of spread of COVID-19, all modalities agreed to be applied exceptionally shall cease to be valid.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China recall the creation of a coordination mechanism to revitalise existing facilitations and reiterate its call on the Chairperson of the Executive Council, in his role as head of this mechanism, to redouble efforts aimed at advancing the full and effective implementation of all aspects of the Convention in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner and to explore ways and means for the revitalisation of all facilitations, in line with the position paper of the NAM States Parties to the Convention and China dated 4 October 2019.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China attach great importance to the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention and in this regard, strongly urge States not Party to the Convention to ratify or accede to it without any further delay or preconditions, and emphasise that those States not Party should not derive any benefit therefrom.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China reiterate their long-standing principled position towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament, under strict and effective international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, we underline that the existence and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continue to pose a significant threat to international peace and security. We further underline that full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention contributes to regional and international peace and security.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China stress that the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as weapons anywhere, by anyone, and under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the provisions of the Convention, legal norms, and standards of the international community. We also reaffirm that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must be held accountable.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China condemn the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups. Deeply concerned about the use or threat of use by such groups, we request the Technical Secretariat to investigate, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, all reports on the use or threat of use of chemical weapons by such groups, and keep the States Parties informed accordingly.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China express their deep concern regarding any attempt to accuse States Parties of using chemical weapons on the basis of unsubstantiated allegations made by media reports or any other open sources, including non-governmental entities. This trend can set a dangerous precedent in the future work of the OPCW.

Noting with serious concern that the final extended deadline of 29 April 2012 for the destruction of chemical weapons was not met by certain possessor States Parties, the NAM States Parties to the Convention and China stress that the destruction of chemical weapons is the fundamental and top priority of the Organisation, and urge the only remaining possessor State Party to expedite all necessary measures to ensure its compliance with the provisions of the Convention and relevant decisions of the policy-making organs.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China stress that the destruction of old chemical weapons and abandoned chemical weapons should be completed in the shortest possible time, in accordance with the Convention and relevant decisions adopted by the policy-making organs.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China stress that further efforts should be made to complete the destruction of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China as soon as possible and to address challenges, including ensuring the safety of people and protecting the environment in accordance with the Convention and Council decision EC-67/DEC.6, as amended by the Council at its Eighty-Fourth Session, according to the destruction plan beyond the year 2016, jointly submitted by Japan and China. The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China take note of the impact of COVID-19 on the destruction of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China, and encourage China and Japan to continue communicating closely to make sure the relevant work is advanced safely and smoothly.

Recalling the decisions of the Executive Council with respect to the elimination and destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons and the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons production facilities, the NAM States Parties to the Convention and China welcome the substantive efforts made and the progress achieved in this regard. We welcome the Director-General's reports on the completion of the destruction of all chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. We look forward to the continuation of the successful cooperation between the OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic on all issues.

We take note of the work done so far by the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and look forward to receiving its reports on its ongoing activities. We expect the approach followed by the FFM teams would be uniform and consistent.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China consider that Article XI is one of the core objectives of the OPCW and attach great importance to the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of this Article, in a manner which avoids hampering the economic or technological development of States Parties, as well as international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, including the international exchange of scientific and technical information, and materials and equipment for the production, processing or use of chemicals for purposes not prohibited under the Convention. We also emphasise the need to strengthen and expedite efforts in the economic and technological development of States Parties.

We also underline the importance of the promotion of international cooperation for the benefit of States Parties through the transfer of technology, materials, and equipment for peaceful purposes in the field of chemistry and the removal of any discriminatory restrictions, such as unilateral coercive measures against other States Parties that are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Convention, affect the Convention's long-term viability, and have an adverse impact on the existing level of trust among States Parties.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China recognise that the Annual Review and Evaluation Workshop of the Components of an Agreed Framework for the Full Implementation of Article XI is a useful platform to develop concrete measures and recommendations to ensure the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of this Article. In this regard, to achieve further improvement, we call for a reinvigoration of this Workshop, to ensure it meets this important purpose. We welcome the active participation of States Parties during the Annual Review and Evaluation Workshop held on 2 November 2020 and request the Article XI facilitator to report on the ideas that emerged, and the activities held during the intersessional period to be reflected in the report of the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

We also request the Secretariat to provide a comprehensive report on the gaps and challenges in respect of the effective implementation of decision C-16/DEC.10, dated 1 December 2011.

We appreciate the efforts made so far by the Article XI facilitator and encourage him to continue inclusive outreach and constructive dialogue with all States Parties. In pursuance of the proposal to establish the Drafting Committee, within the facilitation framework of Article XI, to streamline the list of ideas that emerged from the above-mentioned Review and Evaluation Workshop, we encourage early commencement of the work of the Drafting Committee. It would help prompt evaluation and implementation of these ideas. We encourage all regional groups to nominate participants for the Drafting Committee to ensure early beginning of its work.

We reiterate that a comprehensive discussion with the policy-making organs on the implementation of decision C-16/DEC.10 is the effective way to formulate an OPCW strategy for the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI. In this regard, we strongly call on all States Parties and the Technical Secretariat to also take into consideration the proposals of the NAM States Parties to the Convention and China (C-12/NAT.1, dated 6 November 2007) on the implementation of Article XI of the Convention, including the Plan of Action.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China emphasise that the policy-making organs of the OPCW should preserve and allocate substantial financial, technical, and human resources in the implementation of international cooperation activities, considering national and regional needs and realities, challenges of the developing States Parties, as well as the current situation of the global pandemic.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China commend the progress achieved under the four previous phases of the Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention. We welcome the commencement of the fifth phase of this Programme, and look forward to attaining further accomplishments within the eight identified objectives, as reported in the Note by the Director-General C-25/DG.9 EC-95/DG.11, dated 10 September 2020. To guarantee its sustainability, the NAM States Parties to the Convention and China underline the importance of funding all aspects of this Programme under the regular budget of the OPCW.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China express their support for the project to upgrade the current OPCW Laboratory to an OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology to strengthen the science and technology capabilities of the Technical Secretariat in response to the threat of chemical weapons, as well as to support capacity building in the States Parties. We, therefore, encourage States Parties to support the establishment of the Centre, as appropriate, and urge that its modalities and mandate be considered and adopted by the policy-making organs. We also stress the importance of transparency and efficiency in the establishment, as well as the future work of the Centre.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China stress the need for all States Parties to fully implement their obligations under Article X. We urge States Parties, and in particular those in a position to do so, to contribute to the Voluntary Fund for Assistance to ensure the ability of the Technical Secretariat to develop a state of readiness to provide timely, adequate, and effective assistance to respond to the increasing demand of States Parties.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China pay profound respect to the victims of chemical weapons and their families, and in light of the decision adopted by the Conference of the States Parties at its Sixteenth Session (C-16/DEC.13, dated 2 December 2011), appreciate the States Parties for their contribution to the Trust Fund for the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons and urge all States Parties to actively contribute to the Trust Fund. We underline that insufficient contribution to the Voluntary Fund for Assistance will considerably limit the capacity of the OPCW to provide essential medicines and necessary medical assistance to the victims of chemical weapons.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China would like to draw the Conference's attention to the new challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, the vulnerability of the chemical weapons' victims to COVID-19 requires specific and urgent assistance of all States Parties, in particular the developed ones. Furthermore, the NAM States Parties to the Convention and China underline that taking into account the specific situation of the victims of chemical weapons and the need to help to alleviate the adverse impact of COVID-19 on the victims of chemical weapons, the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) could play an important role in this regard.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China underline the responsibility of the States Parties and Technical Secretariat of the OPCW to assist the victims of chemical weapons, and to coordinate and deliver to them the needed equipment, materials, and medicines, in accordance with Article X. We are of the view that any restrictions, including unilateral measures, imposed by some States Parties against other States Parties, which impede assistance to the victims of chemical weapons, are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Convention.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China urge States Parties to take concrete measures, inter alia, by providing materials and equipment-related assistance available to those States Parties which are in need, without any restriction. In this regard, we welcome the recent efforts by the Director-General for his good offices to facilitate assistance to the victims of chemical weapons. In order to reach a positive outcome on this matter, we encourage the Director-General to continue and intensify his efforts and inform the Conference about the latest developments.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China encourage States Parties and the Technical Secretariat to continue providing appropriate, effective, and tailor-made technical

assistance and support to States Parties in enhancing their national capacities and in carrying out their national implementation measures in the context of Article VII, and provide the necessary financial support to do so. We firmly believe that Article VII obligations necessitate full and effective measures by all States Parties to implement all provisions of the Convention and encourage States Parties to continue working towards this end.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China re-emphasise that the employment of personnel in the Technical Secretariat must be fair and transparent, and stress that it shall be in accordance with Article VIII paragraph 44 of the Convention. It is imperative that the Technical Secretariat ensures an equitable geographical and gender balance at all professional levels of the Organisation. We consider that one of the most effective ways to achieve this objective is for the Technical Secretariat to devise as soon as possible appropriate modalities of a funded internship and a Junior Professional Officer Programme, which will enable candidates from developing regions to have easier access to professional positions in the Technical Secretariat.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China take note with appreciation the continuing efforts to promote gender equity within the OPCW and call for enhanced cooperation to promote the role of women and girls in the peaceful use of chemistry.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China reiterate that the discussions on the draft decision on the OPCW Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters (ABAF) Rules of Procedure should be conducted in an open and inclusive manner, avoiding issues that may lead to politicisation and polarisation. Bearing in mind that the ABAF is an open-ended body without decision-making powers, the NAM States Parties to the Convention and China hold the view that every State Party has the right to nominate an expert it deems qualified and appropriate as a member of the ABAF. We consider that a broad geographical distribution and composition of experts with diversified backgrounds will benefit the functioning of the ABAF.

The NAM States Parties to the Convention and China call for addressing the issue of the aerosolised use of central nervous system-acting chemicals for law enforcement purposes through dialogue and consensus, which is important, in a comprehensive and constructive manner, to be considered in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention.

In conclusion, Mr Chairperson, the NAM States Parties to the Convention and China encourage States Parties to work in the spirit of goodwill and cooperation for the successful conclusion of this session. We reiterate that the practice of consensus-based decision making by the policy-making organs is the right approach for achieving the object and purpose of the Convention. We urge all States Parties to neither polarise nor politicise the work of the Organisation. We further reaffirm the centrality of the policy-making organs in the evaluation and implementation of all issues related to the Convention, in accordance with their respective mandates.

Thank you.