



Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran

The Hague

Statement by

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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 Your Excellency Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki back to take over the helm of the 98th Session of the Executive Council and assure you that my delegation would extend its full cooperation and support to your leadership during the current Session of the Executive Council.

I would also like to thank the Director-General, H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias, for his comprehensive report delivered in this Session and wish to commend him and the Technical Secretariat for their endeavors to tackle their tasks.

The Islamic Republic of Iran associates itself with the statement delivered by H.E. 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.

Mr. Chairperson,

The States Parties created the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and have the responsibility to ensure its mandate is fully and appropriately implemented in accordance with the Convention. The credibility and reputation of the Organization must be upheld at all costs. However, during the past years a lot of damage has been done to the credibility of this Organization and a few States Parties, being confident of having enough votes in favor, have taken advantage of their success to politicize the decisions of the Organization in order to achieve their own interests especially in case of the Syrian Arab Republic. Adoption of non-consensual politically-motivated decisions, broadening unnecessarily the mandate of the Technical Secretariat, involving the Organization in tasks which are not defined as its mandate in accordance with the Convention, allocation of budget to activities unaccepted by States Parties, increase of criticisms against the results and reports of the missions of the OPCW are just a few examples that have jeopardized the credibility of the Organization and created a growing gap among the States Parties.

Mr. Chairperson,

The States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) including the Islamic Republic of Iran which is the major victim of chemical weapons in the last decades, in various occasions constantly condemned, in the strongest

possible terms, the use, development and stockpiling of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances.

The destruction of chemical weapons and universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) are two main elements of chemical disarmament and essential to achieve the object and purpose of the Convention as well as to enhance the security of States Parties, particularly in the volatile region of the Middle East.

The full destruction of the chemical weapons stockpiles as one of the fundamental pillars of the Convention has not yet been completed due to the fact that the United States of America as the only possessor State Party doesn't have a strong inclination to utilize its entire capability to materialize this long-wished objective of the international community. Thus the move towards the post-destruction stage by this Organization has remained pending and problematic. My delegation urges this State Party to utilize its entire capacity, by making use of all relevant technologies and methods, to accelerate the completion of the destruction of its chemical weapons stockpiles in the shortest time and prior to the scheduled timeline.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Syrian Arab Republic joined the CWC in 2013 and immediately thereafter started a constructive cooperation with the Technical Secretariat. Syria destroyed all its 27 chemical weapons production facilities in an unprecedented manner while its territory was in a state of turmoil and conflict. It is unfortunate that in spite of significant measures taken by the Syrian Arab Republic after 2013 and its continuous cooperation with the Technical Secretariat an unjustified 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 94th EC Session. This unfair and unconstructive Decision ignored a large number of monthly reports submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic to the OPCW, several rounds of meetings between Syrian authorities and Technical Secretariat, a large amount of information provided by Syria, 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”, is not included either explicitly or implicitly in the Chemical Weapons Convention. The IIT report was based upon unreliable open sources and invalid information and the chain of custody was not conducted appropriately in the work of the Team. This destructive and unproductive trend supported by certain States Parties and started from the 4th Special Session of the Conference of States Parties on 26 June 2018 was the major turning point to make the grounds for tarnishing the credit and reputation of this Organization in the future.

Having neglected many factors involved in the territory of Syria such as a long war-torn situation in that country, continuing attacks of the Zionist Regime of Israel and terrorist groups 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 5th Paragraph, by setting a silly and unfair 90-day deadline, has complicated the situation and forced the Syrian Arab Republic in a position to take responsibility of incidents and activities that were not under its control. Regretfully the continuous cooperation of the Syrian Arab Republic with the Technical Secretariat was met with scathing criticism and denial by a few States Parties which led to another unfair politicized decision. The Decision “Addressing the Possession and Use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic” (C-25/DEC/9 dated 21 April 2021) just like its preceding one with similar title enjoys a politicised and unrealistic offensive approach towards the

Syrian Arab Republic and ignores the constant and growing cooperation of this State Party with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW. However, this Decision suffers deeply from a lack of both fairness and legality.

The Conference may suspend the rights and privileges of a State Party only after the Executive Council bring the issue or matter to the attention of the Conference. The legality of the Decision is called into question since paragraph 36 of Article VIII and paragraph 2 of Article XII has not been appropriately applied to the Decision and the procedure of ensuring non-compliance of the Syrian Arab Republic has not been taken into account by the Conference through the recommendations of the Executive Council. It is unfortunate that based on such an illegal Decision the rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic are suspended in the Organization and will be reinstated after taking all measures stipulated in paragraph 5 of the other unfair Decision (EC-94/DEC.2).

Regretfully while the hostile approach by certain States Parties against Syria continues, the terrorist groups which are the source of chemical weapons use inside the Syrian Arab Republic are left with impunity. Although the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is making every effort to provide the ground for effective cooperation with the Technical Secretariat, the terrorist groups in Syria continue their attacks against unarmed civilians and have recourse to every tool to fabricate chemical incidents to accuse the Syrian Arab Republic. It is commendable that the Syrian Arab Republic despite all the false allegations and accusations, and the adoption of politicized decisions in the OPCW is still fully cooperating with the Technical Secretariat.

Again my delegation reiterates that the activities of the Fact Finding Missions (FFMs) in Syria should be of technical nature, depoliticized, based on validated information and reliable sources, and carried out on the basis of impartiality and professionalism.

Mr. Chairperson,

The draft Decision on the “draft Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2020-2023” (EC-98/CRP.1) was finalized after several rounds of discussions. We appreciate the Co-Facilitators, Mr. Matteo Fachinotti (Switzerland) and Mr. Jerzy Gierasimiuk (Poland), as well as the Technical Secretariat for preparing the document. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not satisfied that once again the draft decision on Programme and Budget has been provided in an omnibus format. Furthermore, The Islamic Republic of Iran has never recognized the establishment of the IIT in the Organization and is not in a position to accept allocation of budget to the activities of this Team at any form.

Regarding the draft decision “Allowing the Convening of Executive Council Meetings or Sessions in Extraordinary Circumstances” (EC-98/DEC/CRP.7 dated 28 September 2021) proposed by Germany, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran appreciates the efforts by the delegation of Germany for their extensive consultations with the States Parties to reach consensus on the draft decision. However, we are of the view that this draft decision still needs further discussions.

We are also of the view that there is no consensus on the draft decision on “Amendment to the OPCW Tenure Policy”. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran appreciates the endeavors of the Co-facilitators on the Organizational Governance Issues, H.E. Ambassador Matthew Neuhaus of Australia and H.E. Ambassador Laura Dupuy of Uruguay in this regard.

It is a matter of concern that considerable amount of 2,019,950 € have been transferred out of the International Cooperation and Assistance (ICA) Programme since 2015. This is an important programme to the developing countries as Member States of the Organization. Unfortunately, this trend has

been started years ago and should be offset and rectified by considering available practical options including, inter alia, the retention of unspent funds for ICA in a special fund.

The full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI of the Convention is of great importance and it is unfortunate that there is still a lack of necessary progress in the implementation of this Article. Despite the efforts made to this end, the facts are suggestive of an unbalanced implementation of the Convention and non-compliance of some States Parties with their obligations towards the implementation of this Article.

Due to its humanitarian nature, the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons is of high significance and the States Parties and the Technical Secretariat should practically and substantially take necessary actions when they need to do so, to ensure that this humanitarian obligation is rightly met. At present, the necessary support extended to this Network is not correspondent to its long-term goals.

It is also noteworthy to underline that more than tens of thousands victims of chemical weapons in the Islamic Republic of Iran, who are now under unlawful unilateral sanctions are in urgent need of specific medicament and treatment. We strongly reject imposing discriminatory restrictions and particularly unilateral sanctions against the 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 including payment of their assessed contributions. We now need a

tangible measure to be taken by the Organization to alleviate the suffering of the victims of chemical weapons.

In closing I request that this statement to be posted on the public website and the Catalyst portal of the OPCW.

Thank You
