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**ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN**

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

Mr Chairperson  
Director General,  
Distinguished delegates,

I take the privilege to welcome H.E. Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki, as the Chairperson of the Executive Council. We hope that the conduct of business of this session will come to a successful conclusion under your able leadership. My delegation pledges to support you fully in the discharge of your mandate. I would also like to thank Director-General Fernando Arias, for his comprehensive report delivered in this session and wish to commend him and the Technical Secretariat for their endeavours 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.

The States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) including the Islamic Republic of Iran—which is the major victim of chemical weapons in the last decades—at various occasions constantly condemned, in the strongest possible terms, the use, development and stockpiling of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. Obviously, the fundamental objective of the Convention to eliminate all chemical weapons and to achieve a ‘world free of chemical weapons’ cannot be realised before the complete destruction of these horrible weapons by the United States of America as the only remaining possessor State Party. My delegation urges this State Party to utilise its entire capacity, by using whatever technologies and methods possible, to accelerate the completion of the destruction of its chemical weapons stockpiles in the shortest time and prior to the scheduled timeline.

The States Parties created the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and they have the responsibility to ensure its mandate is fully and appropriately implemented in accordance with the Convention. The credibility and reputation of the Organisation must be upheld at all costs. Unfortunately, during the past years a lot of damage has been done to the credibility of this Organisation and a few States Parties, being confident of having enough votes in favour, have taken advantage of their success to politicise the decisions of the Organisation in order to achieve their own political interests, especially in the case of the Syrian Arab Republic. Adoption of non-consensual and politically-motivated decisions, broadening



unnecessarily the mandate of the Technical Secretariat, involving the Organisation in tasks which are not defined as its mandate in accordance with the Convention, allocation of budget to activities unaccepted by the States Parties, increase of criticisms against the results and reports of the missions of the OPCW are just a few examples that have jeopardised the credibility of the Organisation and created a growing gap among the States Parties.

The Syrian Arab Republic joined the Convention in 2013 and immediately thereafter started constructive cooperation with the Technical Secretariat. It 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 during the Ninety-Fourth Session of the Executive Council. 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 the Technical Secretariat, a large amount of information provided by the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as 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 enshrined either explicitly or implicitly in the Convention and is also inconsistent with the 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 Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties on 26 June 2018, was the major turning point to make the grounds for tarnishing the credit and reputation of this Organisation in the future.

Having neglected many factors involved in the territory of the Syrian Republic such as a long war-torn 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 the Syrian Arab Republic, the decision, especially its fifth paragraph, by setting an irrational and unfair ninety-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. 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 decision with a similar title takes 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. The decision also suffers deeply from lack of both fairness and legality.

According to the operative paragraph 7 of this draft decision, the Conference of the States Parties decided to suspend the rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic under the Convention in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article XII of the Convention. It should be noted that in accordance with paragraph 35 of Article VIII, “the Executive Council shall consider any issue or matter within its competence affecting this Convention and its implementation, including concerns regarding compliance, and cases of non-compliance, and, as appropriate, inform the States Parties and bring the issue or matter to the attention of the Conference.” In addition, according to paragraph 36 (b) and (c) of Article VIII of the Convention, “the Executive Council in its consideration of doubts or concerns regarding compliance and cases of non-compliance shall consult with the States Parties involved and, as appropriate, request

the State Party to take measures to redress the situation within a specified time. To the extent that the Executive Council considers further action to be necessary, it shall take, *inter alia*, one or more measures: [...] (b) Bring the issue or matter to the attention of the Conference; (c) Make recommendations to the Conference regarding measures to redress the situation and to ensure compliance.” This fact is also reflected in the preambular paragraphs of the decision.

It should also be noted that in accordance with paragraph one of Article XII “The Conference shall take the necessary measures, as set forth in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of the same Article to ensure compliance with the Convention and in considering action pursuant to paragraph one of Article XII, the Conference shall take into account all information and recommendations on the issues submitted by the Executive Council.” Therefore, the procedure under Article XII including suspending the rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic under the Convention can start only when the Executive Council uses the option provided for under Article VIII subparagraph 36(c). This makes a decision of the Executive Council pursuant to subparagraph 36(c) a requisite for a procedure under Article XII. Hence, the Conference of the States Parties may suspend the rights and privileges of a State Party or may diverge from the recommendations of the Executive Council only after the Executive Council brings the issue or matter to the attention of the Conference of the States Parties.

Furthermore, the paragraph 7 of the provocative and politically-motivated decision (EC-94/DEC.2) adopted during the Ninety-Fourth Session of the Executive Council recommending to the Conference of the States Parties to adopt a decision with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic does not also ignore the fact that the procedure regarding this draft decision which is about the compliance of a State Party should be properly followed and brought to the attention of the Conference of the States Parties only through the Executive Council pursuant to paragraph 2 of Article XII.

Therefore, based on the above-mentioned facts and grounds, my delegation is of the view that as far as the compliance of a States Party is concerned, the decision C-25/DEC.9, dated 21 April 2021, should not have been tabled and adopted in the Twenty-Fifth Session of the Conference of the States Parties without recommendations from the Executive Council. 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 of the States Parties through the recommendations of the Executive Council.

Regretfully, while the hostile approach by certain States Parties against the Syrian Arab Republic is continuing, the terrorist groups which are the main source of chemical weapons danger within the Syrian Arab Republic territory, have been supported by some States Parties, and 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 the Syrian Arab Republic 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 politicised decisions in the OPCW—is still fully cooperating with the Technical Secretariat.

Again, my delegation reiterates that the activities of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in the Syrian Arab Republic should be of a technical nature, depoliticised, based on validated information and reliable sources, and carried out on the basis of impartiality and professionalism.

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 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.

My delegation is not satisfied with the decrease of 2021 budget for International Cooperation and Assistance (ICA) programme, compared to 2020. Moreover, we express our deep concern that the considerable amount of EUR 694,000 has been transferred from the ICA programme to another programme in 2020 as per the Note by the Director-General (EC-97/DG.12, dated 22 June 2021). This is an important programme with regard to the developing Member States of the Organisation. Unfortunately, this trend started years ago and should be offset and rectified in the future.

It is also noteworthy to underline that more than tens of thousands of victims of chemical weapons in my country, 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. 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.

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 the 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.

In closing, I request that this statement to be circulated as an official document of this session and posted on the OPCW's public website and the External Server.

Thank you.