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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 NINETY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

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 (the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China),

At the outset, we would like to welcome you back, H.E. Agustín Vásquez Gómez, Ambassador of El Salvador as the Chairperson of the Executive Council and express our confidence in your leadership to steer this session of the Council to a successful conclusion. We wish to thank Director-General Fernando Arias, and the Vice-Chairpersons of the Executive Council for their reports. The Group conveys its appreciation for the OPCW staff for their dedication to the implementation of the Organisation's noble objectives.

In these challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China underscore the importance for the OPCW and urge all States Parties to continue to ensure the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention ("the Convention") including the economic and technological development of the States Parties, especially in the fields of international cooperation and assistance.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China stress the importance of strict compliance with the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Council and note the exceptional nature of the modalities adopted for the Ninety-Sixth Session of the Executive Council due to the challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic. In that sense, we express the importance of active participation by all States Parties in the work of the OPCW without any discrimination or technical obstacles and emphasise that such modalities should be regarded as exceptional, should not create any precedent for the future, and should cease to be valid upon the termination of these special circumstances.



The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China recall the creation of a coordination mechanism to revitalise existing facilitations, and regret that no meeting of this mechanism was convened in 2020. We reiterate our 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 provisions 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 States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China dated 4 October 2019.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China attach great importance to the universality of the Convention and in this regard, strongly urge the non-State actors to the Convention to ratify or accede to it without any further delay or preconditions and emphasise that those non-State actors should not derive any benefit therefrom.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China reiterate their long-standing principled position toward 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 States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement 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 States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement 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 States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement 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 cause a dangerous precedent in the future work of the OPCW. In this regard, the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China underline that the OPCW is the competent international Organisation to verify the compliance of States Parties with the provisions of the Convention, whose authority and credibility must be upheld at all times.

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, the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement 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 the Convention to expedite all necessary measures to ensure its

compliance with the provisions of the Convention and relevant decisions of the policy-making organs (PMOs).

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement 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 PMOs.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China stress that further efforts should be made to complete destruction of chemical weapons on the territory of China, abandoned by Japan as soon as possible and to address challenges including ensuring the safety of people and protecting the environment in accordance with the Convention and the Council decision (EC-67/DEC.6) as amended at the Eighty-Fourth Session of the Executive Council, and in accordance with the destruction plan beyond the year 2016, jointly submitted by Japan and China. The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China take note of the impact of COVID-19 on the destruction of chemical weapons on the territory of China, abandoned by Japan, 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 Arab Republic chemical weapons, and the destruction of the Syrian Arab Republic chemical weapons production facilities, the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China welcome the substantive efforts made and progress achieved in this regard. We welcome the Director-General's reports on the completion of the destruction of all chemical weapons and chemical weapon production facilities, declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. We look forward to the continuation of successful cooperation existing 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 Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) teams to be uniform and consistent.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement 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, and international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under this Convention, including the international exchange of scientific and technical information and chemicals 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 the States Parties.

We also underline the importance of the promotion of international cooperation for the benefit of States Parties through the transfer of technology, material 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 the States Parties.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China recognise that the annual review and evaluation workshop for the components of an agreed framework for the 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, we request the Article XI facilitator to report on the ideas that have emerged from workshops and other relevant activities held during the intersessional period, to be reflected in the report of the PMOs. We also request the Secretariat to provide a comprehensive report on the gaps and challenges on 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 the continuation of inclusive outreach and constructive dialogue with all States Parties. We also took note of the establishment of a drafting committee to streamline the list of ideas that emerged from the above-mentioned review and evaluation workshops. In this regard, we encourage all regional groups to nominate participants for the drafting committee within the facilitation framework of Article XI to begin its work.

We reiterate that a comprehensive discussion in the PMOs on the implementation of the decision C-16/DEC.10, dated 1 December 2011 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 take into consideration also the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China proposals (C-12/NAT.1, dated 6 November 2007) on the implementation of Article XI of the Convention, including the plan of action.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China emphasise that the PMOs 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 current situation of global pandemic.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China welcome the progress made under the fifth phase of the Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa, despite the public health challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward to achieving greater progress in the realisation of the eight identified objectives of the current phase of the Programme. To guarantee its sustainability, the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China support the importance of funding future phases of this programme under the regular budget of the OPCW.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China express their support for the project to upgrade the current OPCW Laboratory to an OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre) to strengthen science and technology capabilities of the Technical Secretariat in responding to the threat of chemical weapons, as well as to support capacity building within the States Parties. We, therefore, encourage States Parties to support the establishment of the ChemTech Centre as appropriate, and urge that its modalities and mandate be considered and adopted by the PMOs. We also stress the importance of transparency and efficiency in the establishment as well as the future work of the centre.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement 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 States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China pay profound respect to victims of chemical weapons and their families, and in light of the decision adopted by the Sixteenth Session of Conference of the States Parties (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 the 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 the essential medicines and necessary medical assistance to the victims of chemical weapons.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China would like to draw the Council's attention to the new challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, the vulnerability of the chemical weapon's victims to COVID-19 requires specific and urgent assistance of all States Parties in particular the developed countries. Furthermore, the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China underline that taking into account the specific situations of the victim of chemical weapons and the need to help to alleviate 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 States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement 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 States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China urge States Parties to take concrete measures including, 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 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 to intensify his efforts and inform the Council about the latest developments.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement 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 the Article VII obligations necessitate full and effective measures by all States Parties to implement all provisions of the Convention and encourage them to continue working towards this end.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China re-emphasise that the employment of personnel in the Technical Secretariat must be fair, transparent and must ensure equitable geographic distribution and gender balance at all professional levels of the Organisation, in accordance with Article VIII, paragraph 44, of the Convention. We consider 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 Junior Professional Officer programme, which will enable candidates from developing States Parties, to have easier access to professional positions in the Technical Secretariat.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China take note with appreciation the continuing efforts to promote gender equity within the OPCW and call for enhanced cooperation to promote the female role in the peaceful use of chemistry.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement 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, while preserving its independence and avoiding issues that may lead to its politicisation and polarisation. Bearing in mind that the ABAF is an open-ended body without decision making powers, the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China hold the view that every State Party has the right to nominate experts it deems qualified and appropriate as a member of the ABAF. We consider that broad geographical distribution and composition of experts with diversified backgrounds will benefit the functioning of the ABAF.

The States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China call for addressing the issue of aerosolised use of central nervous system-acting chemicals (CNS-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 Convention.

In conclusion Mr Chairperson, the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement 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 PMOs is the right approach for achieving the objective 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 PMOs in the evaluation and implementation of all issues related to the Convention, in accordance with their respective mandates.

Thank you.