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PAKISTAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SHUJJAT ALI RATHORE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC
OF PAKISTAN TO THE OPCW
AT THE NINETY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
ON THE DRAFT DECISION ON THE UNDERSTANDING REGARDING
THE AEROSOLISED USE OF CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM-ACTING
CHEMICALS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PURPOSES**

Mr Chairman,
Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

Today, the matter before us is of high importance. Pakistan has long sympathised with the initiative to address the question of central nervous system-acting chemicals (CNS-acting chemicals). We empathise with the justifications to create an awareness among States Parties on the potential abuse of aerosolised use of CNS-acting chemicals. In the Second Review Conference of the States Parties in 2008, we were one of the few to support the Swiss proposal on riot control and incapacitating agents. Our belief in strengthening the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) is unflagging and we have actively participated in pursuing the interests of the OPCW since its establishment.

We agree that a way must be found to address the issue of CNS-acting chemicals. Shared understandings can become the basis for further work, but these cannot be yet inscribed as rules. It is true that we have discussed the matter now for several years. There remain aspects that still defy general agreement. We need further technical discussions so that certain adjustments highlighted by States Parties can be accommodated. We are attempting to create an understanding among us. This requires consensus. This principle must be upheld. Consensus is the ‘sine qua non’ for progress in the field of disarmament.

Understandings simply cannot be imposed. In fact, any evolving state of agreement would cease to be an understanding the moment it is put to vote. Understandings are by their nature, voluntary and with general agreement they represent the consensus of a community. Now here you have a situation where you call it an understanding while the members of the community are not yet in a position to agree to it. It simply does not work this way. We create our own understandings and are not bound by the imaginings of others.

We have read the changes in the revised draft decision. In the present form, this is not just a simple understanding. This is the language of the Convention modified to include within its provisions completely new and unexamined notions. Reasonable time would be required to examine it.



A lot of time and effort has already gone into this work. It would not be wise to pick its fruits unripened. Pushing this matter through to a vote would be divisive and counterproductive. We therefore hope that the sponsors of the draft decision act prudently and resort to the tried and tested method of our success which is signified in the tradition of consensus.

Thank you.

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