



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 EXPLANATION OF VOTE ON THE UNDERSTANDING REGARDING
THE AEROSOLISED USE OF CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM-ACTING
CHEMICALS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PURPOSES**

It is regrettable that today we lost another opportunity to bridge our differences. The vote on the draft decision on the central nervous system-acting chemicals (CNS-acting chemicals) issue is yet another blow to the tradition of consensus in this Organisation. A vote on the draft decision whose title refers to it as an “understanding” represents a bizarre contradiction. Pakistan has abstained on the draft decision in restraint, although a negative vote would have been justified given the lack of logic and goodwill which this vote signifies, and the fact that it deals a severe blow to an otherwise reasonable proposition.

Pakistan was one of the first States Parties to support the initiative of addressing the CNS-acting chemicals and it continues to support it since 2008. We believe it is our obligation to take into consideration all the relevant matters which would potentially strengthen the Chemical Weapons Convention. However, it is imperative that we move ahead in unison, although this message appears to be fading away into oblivion.

The substance of the CNS-acting chemicals matter is well understood by us; however, a vote has only exaggerated the urgency of the matter and further vitiated the atmosphere. This does not stand to reason. More time for technical discussions which could accommodate genuine concerns of other States Parties was a reasonable call. Disarmament cannot progress through forced decisions. In fact, such steps are more likely create the opposite effect. The only reason this Organisation has shown exemplary success has been the spirit of consensus. It is lamentable that since 2018 voting has come to be identified as a brute measure that creates the mirage of forward movement. This change of course will lead nowhere. It can only be continued at the expense of eroding and eventually losing the unqualified support that the OPCW has enjoyed over the years across the globe. We deplore this state of affairs that has no justification other than a narrow vision and short-term political gain.

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