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**ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN**

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

Mr Chairperson  
Mr Director-General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,

In the beginning, I welcome you back once again, H.E. Ambassador Agustín Vásquez Gómez, to take over the helm of the Ninety-Sixth Session of the Executive Council and assure you that my delegation extends its full cooperation and support to you in your leadership during the first Session of the Executive Council this year. I would also like to thank the Director-General, Fernando Arias, for his comprehensive report delivered in this session and wish to commend him and the Technical Secretariat for their accomplished efforts.

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.

Since the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) the international community opened a window of hope for the total annihilation of a category of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) i.e., chemical weapons which have caused unbearable sufferings to human beings. Unfortunately, the fundamental objective of the Convention to eliminate all chemical weapons—due to the fact that the United States of America as the only remaining possessor State Party has not completed its destruction commitments—remains yet to be realised. The United States of America has caused a delay in the disarmament of chemical weapons stockpiles.

My delegation urges this State Party to stop accusing the other States Parties in this Organisation and instead, make every effort 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, to ensure its compliance with the Convention.

It is a matter of regret that the Organisation is step by step falling into the abyss of a critical situation that is going to damage its credibility and reputation. There have been adverse developments, in the last couple of years, in the efforts to be made to strengthen the Convention and the Organisation which is still continuing due to a few facts such as:



Attempts of some States Parties to take advantage of the Organisation to ensure their political interests; adoption of non-consensual politicised decisions which make their implementation more complicated; broadening unnecessarily the mandate of the Technical Secretariat; involving the Organisation in tasks which are under the mandate of other organisations; discouragement of States Parties to pay their contributions because of the adoption of unfair non-consensual decisions and budget allocations to activities related to such decisions; making unsubstantiated allegations and accusations of certain States Parties especially the United States of America against the others; and increased criticisms against the results and reports of the missions of the OPCW.

These are unpleasant facts creating a growing gap among the States Parties which needs to be bridged very soon.

It is also a matter of serious concern that despite significant measures taken by the Syrian Arab Republic to destroy all its 27 chemical weapons production facilities and continuing cooperation with the Technical Secretariat the politically motivated 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 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 Arab Republic authorities and the Technical Secretariat, a large amount of information provided by the Syrian Arab Republic, visits and other activities done in constant cooperation of the Syrian Arab Republic 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 mentioned neither explicitly nor 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 IIT. 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, can tarnish the credit and reputation of this Organisation in the future.

Having neglected many factors involved in the territory of the Syrian Arab 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 related missions and activities, the decision, especially the fifth 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, while this hostile approach by certain States Parties against the Syrian Arab Republic continues, the terrorist groups who are the main factor of the high risk of chemical weapons inside the Syrian Arab Republic, supported by some States Parties, 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. It is necessary for the States Parties to refrain from taking any action that would obfuscate the Syrian Arab Republic’s constructive cooperation 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 technical nature, depoliticised, based on validated information and reliable sources, and carried out on the basis of impartiality and professionalism.

The draft decision EC-92/DEC/CRP.9/Rev.5 entitled “Understanding Regarding the Aerosolized Use of Central Nervous System-Acting Chemicals for Law Enforcement Purposes” suffers from major technical ambiguities and legal uncertainties which were detected by the joint working paper of three delegations from the Republic of China, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the Islamic Republic of Iran (EC-95/WP.1 dated 2 October 2020). The nature and lethality of all central nervous systems-acting chemicals (CNS-acting chemicals) as well as their definition have not yet been discussed technically in the Organisation. They are neither inserted in the text nor in the Schedules of the Convention. The state of having a low safety margin of every CNS-acting chemical is also under question since there are some CNS-acting chemicals which do not enjoy the low safety margin and are also used for medical and pharmaceutical purposes. Involvement of law enforcement of the States Parties into this will make the implementation of this draft decision, in case it is adopted in the future, more complicated. We urge the proponents of this draft decision to avoid making the States Parties to take on new obligations which are beyond the letter of the Convention. It is of utmost importance that all decisions in the Organisation be taken through consensus, especially when they are about issues which are not included in the Convention and require interpretation and serious discussion among the States Parties.

On the draft decision entitled “OPCW Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters (ABAF) - Rules of Procedures” my delegation is of the view that the proposed draft decision requires amendments to make it acceptable.

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.

It should be underlined 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 the 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. These unilateral coercive measures have deprived the victims of chemical weapons of access to essential medicines. 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. The international community highly expects that we act together in a responsible manner to assist those who are in dire need.

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 Mr Chairperson, 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.

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