



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

Ninety-Eighth Session  
5 – 7 October 2021

EC-98/NAT.44  
5 October 2021  
ENGLISH only

**PAKISTAN**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SULJUK MUSTANSAR TARAR  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC  
OF PAKISTAN TO THE OPCW  
AT THE NINETY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

We welcome you back at the helm of the Ninety-Eighth Session of the Executive Council. I believe that with your well-known diplomatic skills and wisdom, you would be able to guide this session to a successful conclusion, and I assure you of my delegation's complete support in your work.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

The host country has opened up and a considerable number of people have now been vaccinated, we hope that the OPCW shall soon be able to return to the traditional mode of working.

We commend the efforts of the Technical Secretariat ("the Secretariat") for ensuring continued function despite the challenges, and all the delegations for continued cooperation in times of pandemic.

When the Chemical Weapons Convention ("the Convention") came into force in 1997 the world possessed sizeable quantities of chemical weapons posing a serious threat—the Convention envisioned that one day we would be free of this scourge. In just over two decades, we have achieved verified destruction of more than 98 percent of the declared stockpiles. This is a great task we have all accomplished together. If the speed of this progress continues steadily, we shall soon see the day when we would have a world without any chemical weapons. We understand that due to the pandemic the destruction of the remaining stockpiles has been affected; however, we hope that the progress would not be halted now and the timelines will be met.

We are living in challenging times and achieving universality of the Convention would be one big step in the direction of our ideal of global peace. We urge the Secretariat to step up its efforts to realise this objective as per the Convention as soon as possible.



In our earnest efforts, we must also remain cognisant of the threat of re-emergence of chemical weapons. The horrific incidents involving use of these weapons that we have seen in the recent years are a stark reminder of this possibility. We need to ensure that such incidents do not happen again. Pakistan reiterates its categorical condemnation of the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone, and under any circumstances.

We have read the Director-General's recent reports on progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. We understand that the pandemic also affected the Secretariat's work in this area. However, it is noteworthy that engagement with Syria continues. We also note that preparations for the meeting between the Director-General and the Syrian Foreign Minister are under way. The Tripartite Agreement, which facilitates the Secretariat's mandated activities in Syria with the assistance of UNOPS, has also been extended until December 2021. Pakistan supports the continuation of constructive engagement between Syria and the Secretariat for early resolution of all outstanding matters.

Modifications to the tenure policy are once again moot, and once again there is talk of an exceptional measure. Exceptional measures seem to be acquiring such a routine as to almost lose the meaning of the term. We agree with States Parties calling for more substantive consideration of the issue. The tenure policy, once considered almost sacrosanct, has been subjected to the band-aid approach—one fix here, a tinkering there. We are also not dismissive of concerns relating to how further changes could impact the composition of the Secretariat. The domination of any particular group in the Organisation cannot be in its long-term interests. We have already seen how a domineering attitude has led to pushing through several decisions which might, before long, bring the Organisation to the brink. We hope that this approach will be dispensed with—the sooner, the better. Pakistan understands that proposals for changing the application of the tenure policy might have objective reasons. However, it is imperative that the issue at hand be given sufficient time for further deliberations to ensure that it is resolved through consensus.

Another current issue of interest is the Draft Programme and Budget for the year 2022–2023. In the new budgetary proposal, the Secretariat has departed from the practice of zero nominal growth; however, the increase in the overall budget appears inevitable. The proposal also contains approval for extension of the special fund for IT infrastructure to support implementation of the decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 for another year. It makes the document controversial since a number of delegations continue to oppose the very establishment of the attribution mechanism. It is also important to note that a considerable amount has been transferred out of International Cooperation and Assistance (ICA) Programme in the last six years, which has affected the African Group the most. Pakistan supports the African Group's proposal to establish a special fund within the regular budget for ICA activities.

To Pakistan, all provisions of the Convention have equal importance, since we signed the Convention as a complete document that covered all the aspects which were most relevant to the effective functioning of the Organisation. Therefore, the provisions of the Convention which relate to international cooperation and assistance deserve to be given as much importance as others. It is of utmost importance that the Convention is implemented in a balanced manner. The economic and technological interests of all the States Parties must be given due attention so that the long-term interests and the endurance of the Organisation is ensured. Pakistan has continued to play its vital role in highlighting this aspect of the Convention and would continue to work towards strengthening the Organisation in all possible ways.

In the end, I would like to urge that for the sustainability of this Organisation and for its effective functioning, we all need to revert to the traditional ways that made this Organisation a success story not just in the disarmament domain but also as an example to follow in any multilateral forum. The possibilities are endless and when we start listening to each other and leave narrow and short-term political interests aside, restoration of the traditional harmony is still possible in this Organisation. I appeal to our collective wisdom and hope to revert to our days of working by way of consensus.

Thank you.

--- 0 ---