



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-Sixth Session
29 November – 3 December 2021

C-26/NAT.46
29 November 2021
ARABIC and ENGLISH only

IRAQ

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DR HISHAM AL-ALAWI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me and my delegation pleasure to extend our warmest congratulations to you, Mr Chairperson, on your election as Chairperson of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as to the Vice-Chairpersons. We are fully confident that your extensive diplomatic expertise will lead to the success of the Conference. My delegation also reiterates its full support for the renewal of the appointment of Mr Fernando Arias Gonzáles, the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, for a second term of office considering the great efforts that he has made since he took office on 25 July 2018. We also confirm our full readiness to cooperate with him to ensure a successful conclusion of the current session and all activities of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW, and to iron out difficulties in order to reach a common ground that would lead us to adopt successful decisions that promote international peace and security.

Despite the enormous challenges it has faced recently, Iraq has managed to implement its obligations under the Convention ahead of time. The destruction by Iraq of the remnants of its former chemical programme was announced and Iraq was issued a certificate by the OPCW Director-General to that effect in March 2018. Therefore, my country's delegation would like to express its profound gratitude for the efforts made by the OPCW, represented by its Director-General and Technical Secretariat. We also thank the inspection teams which visited Iraq and demonstrated high professionalism and cooperated fruitfully with the Iraqi national authorities. We would also like to thank all Member States and all those who have supported and assisted Iraq in achieving that goal.

The entire world is going through exceptional circumstances due to the coronavirus pandemic. We all have a shared responsibility that requires further action to ensure the business continuity of the Organisation, in order to achieve its goal of a world free of chemical weapons. Therefore, Iraq supports the OPCW Budget for the next biennium.



My delegation voices deep concern over the recent use of toxic chemicals and strongly condemns any use of toxic chemicals, anywhere, and at any time. We recall that we suffered from the use of chemical weapons during the war on the ISIL terrorist gangs, which targeted civilians and security forces, causing over 2,500 casualties. Therefore, we call upon the OPCW and the States Parties to support the Iraqi Government in providing medical and psychological services to those casualties, establishing a health centre or hospital specialised in the treatment of toxic chemical agent injuries, and funding the project through the OPCW fund for support for chemical weapons victims.

The OPCW has proven to be an efficient instrument in the verification of stringent procedures relating to security and safety issues concerning remaining chemical weapons and related substances. Therefore, the Government of Iraq supports any international efforts aimed at preventing the use of such weapons by anyone.

Accordingly, the Government of the Republic of Iraq supports the working paper presented by the United States of America entitled “Working Paper on the Draft Decision ‘Understanding Regarding the Aerosolised Use of Central Nervous System-Acting Chemicals for Law Enforcement Purposes’ (C-26/DEC/CRP.1, Dated 6 October 2021)” (C-26/WP.1, dated 5 November 2021).

Iraq reaffirms its firm position that the OPCW should be distanced from any politicisation of its work and preserve its character as a technical organisation. Also, Iraq believes firmly that we all have a responsibility to implement the conventions and treaties on the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, and stresses that we should all restore the principle of consensus within the Organisation and constructive cooperation to achieve its objectives.

Iraq also stresses the need for recruitment at the Technical Secretariat to be made in accordance with Article VIII, paragraph 44, of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which states that due regard should be given to equitable geographical representation and gender equality. To this end, Iraq considers that it is necessary to find more effective ways to achieve this goal. Also, since its accession to the Convention, the Republic of Iraq has never had the chance to be represented in the body of OPCW staff members, despite the many requests made by the Iraqi Representation.

My country’s government firmly believes that it is our collective responsibility to implement the conventions and treaties on the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. In this regard, the Government of Iraq supports the efforts being made to achieve the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention as soon as possible, as the only framework and international instrument through which a world free of chemical weapons can be realised. It renews its call to the States that have not yet done so to join the Convention as soon as possible and place their relevant facilities and sites under the verification of the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

I request that this statement be adopted as an official document of this session of the Conference and posted on the official website of the Organisation.