

**ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN****STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ALIREZA KAZEMI ABADI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO
THE OPCW AT THE 100TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson, at the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption as the Chairperson of the 100th Session of the Executive Council and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation in discharging your duties. I would also like to thank Director-General Fernando Arias, for his comprehensive report delivered in this session.

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 Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (the Convention) is a balanced instrument in which—along with the disarmament aspects—the promotion of international cooperation for peaceful purposes including the international exchange of scientific and technical information, chemicals and equipment is similarly addressed. However, the implementation of the latter is considerably lagging in comparison to the former. The implementation of the convention should be balanced in the same manner as its provisions are.

The Organisation has also been facing other challenges in the recent years, which are mainly due to the short-sighted geopolitical ambitions of a few States Parties, being confident of having enough favourable votes. It is unfortunate, that during the past years, a lot of damage has already been done to the credibility and integrity of the Convention and the Organisation. The credibility and reputation of the Organisation must be upheld at all costs.

The destruction of chemical weapons and universality of the Convention are the two main pillars of chemical disarmament and are essential to achieve the objects and purposes of the Convention and the enhancement of peace and security of the States Parties. However, the full destruction of the chemical weapons stockpiles has not yet been completed.

The Islamic Republic of Iran remains seriously concerned that the sole possessor State Party has not complied with this fundamental obligation of the Convention. This major possessor State Party should comply with its obligations under the convention, and accelerate its efforts, by making use of all relevant technologies and methods, to complete the destruction of its chemical weapons stockpiles in the shortest possible time and prior to the scheduled timeline.



Mr Chairperson, regarding the Syrian issue, once again, we wish to remind the Council that the Syrian Arab Republic, despite its difficult security situation, has shown its firm commitment to meet its obligations in a cooperative and transparent manner. Syria, after acceding to the Convention in 2013, prepared its initial declaration and submitted it within days, which is commendable and unprecedented. Syria declared its entire chemical stockpiles and production facilities that were destroyed with international participation and close oversight of the OPCW, under very difficult and complicated conditions that Syria was being faced with.

Nevertheless, in the last couple of years, some States Parties made tremendous politically motivated efforts to manipulate the Organisation to adopt unjustified decisions against the Syrian Arab Republic. Such efforts have further enabled the opposition groups to continue their violence and terrorist acts against innocent people and the Government of Syria.

The Islamic Republic of Iran unequivocally supports the continuation of the cooperation between the Syrian Arab Republic and the OPCW within a mutually agreed framework of collaboration. It also firmly believes that cooperation and dialogue have proven to be the best mechanism to resolve the remaining technical issues. The technical issues need to be resolved through cooperation and dialogue, and avoiding political pressure, which has proven time and again to be a failed strategy and would jeopardise the whole process.

We are also convinced that the reports and activities of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria should be of a pure technical nature, depoliticised, based on valid information collected from reliable sources, and carried out on the basis of impartiality and professionalism.

Unfortunately, the current approach of the Organisation is not fully consistent with the relevant provisions of the Convention. Adopting non-consensual and politically motivated decisions; unnecessarily broadening the Technical Secretariat (the Secretariat) mandate; involving the Organisation in tasks which are not defined as its mandate in accordance with the Convention as well as critical working methods, results, and reports of the missions of the OPCW – these are just a few examples which have jeopardised the credibility of the Organisation and created a growing gap between States Parties.

The Convention assures the States Parties that their economic and technological development for peaceful purposes would not be hampered by implementing the obligations under the Convention. This assurance is of the utmost importance since international cooperation in chemical trade and technology for peaceful purposes is a compelling incentive for accession. It further encourages States Parties, especially developing countries, to participate more actively in the work of the Organisation and the implementation of the Convention. Therefore, failure to fulfil this assurance through removing impediments to the economic and technological development of States Parties would irreparably impair the integrity of the Convention and could be an obstacle on the way to the universality.

Article XI, as it stands, establishes a general principle on how the States Parties should frame their national policies in the field of chemical cooperation and activities, and how the Organisation should implement verification procedures. Despite this clarity, there are still some national tendencies, as well as certain export control regimes, which violate and undermine the letter and spirit of Article XI. In this context, the Islamic Republic of Iran firmly believes that the OPCW Director-General shall use all means, capacities, and powers for the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of the provisions of Article XI, which is an essential element in the realisation of the objective and purpose of the Convention.

Due to its humanitarian nature, the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons is of high significance, and the States Parties and the Secretariat should practically and substantially take the necessary actions 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. Therefore, it is quite necessary to consider the possibility of direct allocation of resources within the regular OPCW programme and budget.

It is also noteworthy to underline that more than tens of thousands of victims of chemical weapons in the Islamic Republic of Iran, who are now under unlawful unilateral sanctions, are in urgent need of specific medicaments and treatments. We strongly reject imposing discriminatory restrictions, particularly unilateral sanctions, against the Member States of this Organisation, which directly affects the health and medications of the victims. We now require a tangible measure to be taken by the Organisation to alleviate the suffering of the victims of chemical weapons. In this context, the Islamic Republic of Iran, along with the other Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement to the Convention and China request the OPCW Secretariat to explore mechanisms, including cooperation with the World Health Organization to contribute by assisting the victims of chemical weapons.

The Secretariat should also pay proper attention that the systematic unilateral sanctions have many direct or indirect—and unavoidable impacts—upon some States Parties that make it difficult for them to meet all their obligations under the Convention. One of the unavoidable examples is the negative impact on the payment of assessed contributions of the concerned States Parties, which seems to be very important for the Organisation.

Mr Chairperson, my delegation notes with appreciation that the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference has started its work under the chairpersonship of H.E. Ambassador Lauri Kuusing of Estonia. We wholeheartedly hope that as the Fifth Review Conference approaches, the OPCW returns to its previous successful path with collective wisdom. To this end, all efforts should be made to avoid politicisation and polarisation within the Organisation and pave the way to mutual understanding and cooperation. The OPCW, as a professional and technical organisation, should maintain impartiality and professionalism to perform its functions in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, and remain vigilant against any abuse of rights and powers under the Convention.

In conclusion, regarding the recent extensive relaxation of COVID-19 rules in the Host Country and elsewhere, my delegation strongly believes that the normal meeting procedures in the Organisation could and should be restored to enable all delegations to fully participate in the deliberations. We expect that the next Executive Council meeting will be held in the normal format with the standard arrangements should the COVID-19 situation remains at its present level of stability.

I request that this statement be posted as an official document of this session on the OPW server and public website. Thank you

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