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INDIA

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR REENAT SANDHU PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA TO THE OPCW AT THE 101ST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General
Ambassadors and delegates,

On behalf of my delegation, let me begin by complementing His Excellency Ziad M. D. Al Atiyah, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, for his able leadership as Chairperson of the Executive Council. We are confident that you will conduct the session smoothly and successfully. I assure you of the full support and cooperation of the Indian delegation. I would also like to take this opportunity to applaud the commitment of the Technical Secretariat, led by Director-General Fernando Arias, towards the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”).

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by H.E. Ambassador Fikrat Akhundov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Convention and China.

India attaches high importance to the Convention, a unique and non-discriminatory disarmament instrument that serves as a model for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. India remains steadfast in its commitment for the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention and supports all efforts to achieve its universality.

India condemns the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anybody, and under any circumstances. We believe that all investigations into the alleged use of chemical weapons should be impartial, credible, and objective, and should be conducted strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, in conformity with the delicate balance of power and responsibility enshrined under it. India firmly believes that the impartiality and integrity of the OPCW must be preserved and maintained under all circumstances.

We take note of the progress in the destruction of stockpiles of remaining chemical weapons and reiterate the importance of adhering to the scheduled timeline.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, India has actively cooperated with the OPCW for inspections of its declared industrial facilities. In light of emerging challenges and scientific advancements, India believes that the OPCW needs to evolve a more transparent, equitable, and objective criteria and modalities for inspections.



The challenges ahead require a strong collective reaffirmation of our commitment and resolve. We urge all States Parties to work together in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the verification system. Progress in science and technology has an inevitable impact on the implementation of the Convention, and in this regard, we note the efforts of the Scientific Advisory Board to remain relevant by adjusting to the changing requirements.

India stands for the effective implementation of Article XI of the Convention to promote peaceful uses of chemical technology and the enhancement of international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention. It is important that the provisions of the Convention are implemented in a manner that does not hinder legitimate activities, especially in developing countries.

India has collaborated with the Technical Secretariat for conducting various training programmes to enhance analytical and laboratory skills in States Parties. Now in its fifth year of implementation, the programme has trained experts from more than 50 States Parties, including from the Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa regions. India stands ready to assist the OPCW in its future capacity-building efforts. We also look forward to the inauguration of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology in 2023 and hope that it will further strengthen training, technical partnerships, and exchanges between scientists and researchers in the field of chemistry.

India welcomes the preparatory work for the Fifth Review Conference in 2023, started under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador Lauri Kuusing, Permanent Representative of Estonia. We appreciate the consultative manner of discussions and hope that the process will be based on constructive engagement, unity of purpose, and shared commitment to advance the balanced implementation of the Convention by the States Parties. We emphasise the importance of the principle of consensus and the need for decisions to be taken by States Parties collectively, in close consultation and cooperation with each other.

I request that this statement be considered an official document of this session and posted on the external server and the public website.

Thank you.

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