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**IRAQ**

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ TO THE  
OPCW AT THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE  
STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,  
Mr Director-General,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me and my country's delegation to the Conference pleasure to extend our warmest congratulations to you, Excellency Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela of South Africa, on your election as Chairperson of the Twenty-Seventh 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 outstanding diplomatic expertise will lead to the success of the Conference. My country's delegation also reiterates its support for Mr Fernando Arias Gonzales, the Director-General of the OPCW, for the significant efforts he has been making since he took office. We affirm 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 iron out difficulties in order to bring closer together views that would lead us to the adoption of successful decisions, thereby promoting international peace and security.

Our country's delegation supports the statement delivered by 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. It also highly appreciates the ongoing consultations within the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference scheduled to be held in May 2023. We stress the importance of this Working Group and encourage its full cooperation with all States Parties and regional groups with a view to achieving a consensual outcome at the Fifth Review Conference.

The entire world is facing tremendous challenges, and we all have a shared responsibility that requires further action to ensure business continuity of the Organisation, in order to achieve its goal of a world free of chemical weapons. To this end, Iraq will support the OPCW budget for next year.

We also express our deep concern over the use of toxic chemicals and strongly condemn any use of such chemicals, anywhere and at any time. We would like to remind everyone that Iraq and its people suffered from the use of chemical weapons during previous wars, the latest being the war on the Daesh terrorist gangs, which targeted civilians and security forces, causing more than 2,500 casualties. We therefore urge the OPCW and the States Parties to support the Iraqi government in providing those casualties with health and psychological services, establishing



a healthcare centre or hospital specialised in the treatment of toxic chemical injuries, and financing the project through the OPCW Fund for the Victims of Chemical Weapons.

The OPCW has proven its efficiency as a tool for verifying the stringent security procedures for chemical weapons and related substances which still exist. Therefore, the Government of Iraq is in favour of any international effort that aims to prevent the use of these weapons by anyone. Iraq will, thus, continue to support all proposals for the inclusion of chemicals (that have non-peaceful uses) in the tables of prohibited chemicals in the Annex to the Convention, as we believe in the need to support any proposal that would achieve a world free of chemical weapons.

Against this backdrop, and in order to promote the role of the OPCW in performing its mandate in an optimal manner and in carrying out the desired tasks as and when necessary, my country's delegation supports the proposal made by Germany calling for allowing the Executive Council to hold meetings or sessions in emergency circumstances and urges all other States and regional groups to support it.

Iraq affirms its firm position that the OPCW and its decisions should be distanced from any politicisation and that its character as a purely technical organisation should be preserved. 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 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 paragraph 44 of Article VIII of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which states that due regard should be given to equitable geographical representation and gender equality. Therefore, we consider it necessary to find more effective ways to achieve this goal, especially as the Republic of Iraq, since its accession to the Convention, has never had the chance to be represented in the body of OPCW staff members, despite the many requests made by the Iraqi Representation.

In conclusion, my country's government firmly believes that it is incumbent upon us all to implement the conventions and treaties on the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. In this regard, we support the efforts being made to achieve the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention as soon as possible, as the only framework and the most outstanding international instrument through which a world free of chemical weapons can be achieved. We reiterate our call to the States Parties that have not yet done so to accede to the Convention as soon as possible and to place their relevant facilities and sites under the verification of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW.

I request that this statement be considered an official document of this session of the Conference of the States Parties and posted on the OPCW's public website and on Catalyst.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.