

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. REZA NAJAFI
DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER FOR LEGAL AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
AT THE FIFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES
PARTIES TO REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE
CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION
The Hague, 15-19 May 2023**

In the Name of Allah

Mr. Chairperson,

Distinguished delegates,

First, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the chair of the Fifth Review Conference, and assure you of our full support and cooperation. I would also like to appreciate the Director General and the Secretariat for their hard efforts and preparation of this conference. My delegation associates itself with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of Azerbaijan.

Since its entry into force 26 years ago, the Chemical Weapons Convention has played an important role in enhancing international peace and security. By any measure, we have made encouraging progress in the implementation of the Convention. Nevertheless, there is still a long way to achieve the object and purpose of the Convention towards a world free of chemical weapons and ensuring the promotion of trade in chemicals as well as international cooperation and exchange of scientific and technical information in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited by the Convention.

This underlines the important task before the Conference, which is to oversee the implementation of the Convention, and to act in order to promote its object and purpose.

To that end, the Conference must conduct a comprehensive review of the Convention's implementation, the Organization's operation and all related developments during the past five years, in order to identify the challenges and obstacles, and to adopt a balanced, action-oriented and forward-looking roadmap for the next five years. Basically, this process must be guided by a number of key principles, including the following:

- a) All measures and decisions must be directed at fulfilling the object and purpose of the Convention;
- b) The CWC is founded on a delicate balance between the rights and obligations of the Parties, thus ensuring the full, effective, balanced and non-discriminatory implementation of all pillars of the Convention is not an option or optional but an inevitable must;
- c) Ensuring the Convention's universality is vital for achieving the goal of a world free from chemical weapons;
- d) Rather than being merely a procedural issue, consensual decision making is an extremely essential element in furthering the objectives of the Convention; adoption of certain non-consensual decisions in the past clearly proved the harmful nature of this approach; this alarming trend must come to an end;
- e) Politicization is absolutely poisonous for both, the Convention and the Organization; it undermines their integrity and credibility and

polarizes the States Parties; indeed, abusing the OPCW for advancing the geopolitical rivalry and interests of a certain group of States is an absolutely destructive approach; to avoid further polarization of the Parties, this must stop;

f) Constructive dialogue and cooperation as well as paying due consideration to the technical and professional nature of the work is vital for the credibility of both the CWC and the OPCW as well as promoting their effectiveness; this is the right approach that must be pursued, particularly in regard to the Syrian file;

g) Addressing the needs of chemical weapons victims must be accorded a high priority; acknowledging the presence, at this Conference, of a number of Iranian citizens who are the victims of chemical weapons -- provided by Western States and used by Saddam-- I must stress that imposing sanctions on their needs, particularly the medical equipment and medicine they need to alleviate their sufferings and at least to breathe slightly normally, is absolutely unlawful and extremely inhumane; such sanctions is but an insult to their injury; stop torturing them;

h) And last but not the least, the Convention does not operate in vacuum; if it is to remain effective, all -- I repeat -- all parties must constantly receive all the intended benefits from being a Party to CWC and a Member of the OPCW; over the past 26 years, we made great accomplishments in the elimination of chemical weapons; it is however a source of deep concern that, during the same period, we have witnessed a constant lack of expected progress in such important

areas as assistance, protection and international cooperation; this cannot and mustnot continue; therefore, every effort must be made to redress this alarming situation; the best possible option to that end might be -- of course after the full accomplishment of the destruction process of chemical weapons this year-- to redirect all resources and potentials of the OPCW towards the full and effective implementation of important provisions like Articles X and XI, respectively on “assistance” and “economic and technological development”; in this context, the removal of all unilateral sanctions and other restrictions is crucial as they are unlawful, and prevent, in one way or another, the developing States Parties from enjoying their rights under the Convention persistently and in a full, effective and non-discriminatory manner.

Mr. Chairperson,

Distinguished delegates,

Based on these principles, the Review Conference must adopt a comprehensive and action-oriented roadmap for the next five years. To that end, my delegation proposes the inclusion of the following points in the Conference’s outcome document:

1. Revival of the well-established tradition of consensus in decision-making on all issues within the policy making organs of the OPCW;
2. Removal of any and all unilateral sanctions and other restrictions of any kind that impede the promotion of free trade in

chemicals as well as the international cooperation and exchange of scientific and technical information in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention, and restrict the development and promotion of scientific and technological knowledge in the field of chemistry for peaceful purposes;

3. Strong commitment of States Parties to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of Article XI of the Convention;

4. Taking concrete measures to address the needs of chemical weapons victims, including through the allocation of the required financial resources from the regular budget of the OPCW for such victims, as well as the removal of all sanctions and restrictions on their medical needs;

5. Effective and efficient use of Chem-Tech Center to support the capacity building programs of the Technical Secretariat for the developing States Parties, with a view to evolving the Center to a platform to advance the international cooperation among the States Parties through the exchange of the experience and knowledge in chemistry and training the relevant experts of the National Authorities;

6. Ensuring the universality of the Convention, including in particular through urging the Israeli regime -- whose WMDs are a major threat to regional and international peace and security -- to join the Convention without any precondition and further delay;

7. Restoring the technical nature of the Organization in fulfilling the mandate of the Convention, including through addressing the verification related issues in full accordance with the provisions of the Convention and its Verification Annex, as well as avoiding non-consensual and political Ad-hoc mechanisms in this regard.

Finally, as a major victim of the systematic use of chemical weapons in contemporary history, and fully committed to its obligations under the Convention, the Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to the full, effective, balanced and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Convention and professional operation of the Organization. My delegation will spare no efforts in cooperating with you, Mr. Chairperson, as well as all interested delegations towards a successful Review Conference.

I wish to request this statement be circulated as an official document of this session and posted both on the external and public website of the OPCW.

Thank you for your attention.