



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-Seventh Session
28 November – 1 December 2022

C-27/NAT.120
28 November 2022
ENGLISH only

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR REZA NAJAFI DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN FOR LEGAL AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
AT THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES
PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, H.E. Ambassador Vusimuzi Madonsela of South Africa as the Chairperson of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties on your well-deserved election. I assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation. I would also like to thank the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat for their professional and hard efforts.

My delegation would also like to associate itself with the statement delivered by Azerbaijan on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

Mr Chairperson, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry-into-force of the Chemical Weapons Convention is a high time for celebration. It is also an occasion for renewal of our commitment to disarmament within a non-discriminatory and multilateral framework of the Convention. As a major victim of the most systematic use of chemical weapons in contemporary history, the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its strong commitment to a world free of chemical weapons.

This year is Thirty-fifth anniversary of the tragic chemical attack on City of Sardasht. We never forgive and forget those countries that provided chemical weapons precursors and equipment to Saddam's regime, particularly by German and other European and US companies. They are accomplices in the war crime committed in Halabja and Sardasht and should be brought to justice. It is not subject to passage of time.

While appreciating the progress made in implementation of the Convention over the past twenty-five years. We should not forget that there is still a long way to achieve the object and purpose of the Convention. The continued existence of chemical weapons stockpiles inside and outside of the Convention constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security, and also undermines the integrity and entirety of the Convention. Therefore, universality and total destruction of all chemical weapons stockpiles remains the key objective of the Convention and the top priority of the Organisation. It is the responsibility of the sole possessor State Party



to destroy all of its chemical weapon stockpiles within the framework of the Convention and its verification regimes.

Article X on assistance and protection against chemical weapons use is the main embodiment of the humanitarian objectives of the Convention. We are of the view that the measures taken to implement the Article X, including the establishment of the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons, the voluntary fund for assistance, and the OPCW's Rapid Response and Assistance Mission, as well as workshops and training courses, are not adequate to contribute to the full and effective implementation of the provisions of Article X.

Deplorably, since the establishment of the voluntary fund for chemical weapons victims, no concrete measure has been taken to meet the needs of the chemical weapons victims. Sustained reserve and lack of political will by those States Parties that are in a position to contribute to the fund, has undermined the effectiveness of the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons and the fund established in this regard. It is highly expected the allocation of a budget from the regular budget for the Fund and the Network.

Article XI is one of the main pillars of the Convention and its implementation, in a full, effective, and non-discriminatory manner is essential for achieving the Convention's object and purpose. One of the main aims of this Article is to promote free trade of chemicals and chemical equipment among States Parties.

Regrettably, twenty-five years after entry-into-force of the Convention and in spite of the provisions of Article XI and the relevant decisions by the Conference of the States Parties, the commitments of the States Parties in this field have not been fully met. Additionally, arbitrary export control exclusive clubs, along with illegal and unjustified unilateral coercive measures, are clearly inconsistent with the objectives of the Convention.

Unilateral illegal sanctions, particularly on provision of medicine and medical supplies needed for treatment of chemical victims is not only a clear breach of the Convention but also a serious violation of international human rights and humanitarian law which furthered the suffering of chemical injuries. My sisters and brothers who still suffer from chemical weapons attacks are victims of chemical weapons provided to Saddam in 1980s and are victims of unilateral coercive measures in 2020s.

The Conference should call upon the States Parties to remove any discriminatory restrictions, such as unilateral sanctions against other States Parties, which affect the Convention's long-term viability and have an adverse impact on the existing trust among the States Parties.

The universality of the Convention is essential to achieve the object and purpose of the Convention and to enhance the security of the States Parties. This Conference should underscore the fact that the objectives of the Convention will not be fully realised, as long as there remains even a single non-party that could possess or acquire such heinous weapons. Attaining a world free of chemical weapons is the aspiration of the international community as well as this Organisation.

Since the adoption of the decision on the "Action Plan for the Universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention" (EC-M-23/DEC.3, dated 24 October 2003), although some progress was achieved in the realisation of the universality, still much remains to be accomplished to ensure the universality of this key instrument.

The establishment of a zone free of chemical weapons—and all other weapons of mass destruction—in the Middle East, is also important and consistent with the objective of the universality of the Convention. The Conference should strongly urge those not yet Party to the Convention to ratify or accede to it, without further delay and any precondition, especially the Zionist Regime, whose weapons of mass destruction stockpiles are the serious threat to regional and international peace and security.

Furthermore, it is in contravention of the letter and spirit of the Convention that the remaining outsiders be able to take advantage of its benefits for the States Parties. In this regard, the outsiders shall not take the advantage of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology, including its services and capacity building programmes in the field of research, analysis and training. Helping them to promote their chemical capabilities which can be used in Chemical Weapons development is a serious violation of the Convention.

As we heard repeatedly, the Syrian Arab Republic welcomes the OPCW's deployment of the Declaration Assessment Team for the twenty-fifth round of consultations. Similarly, it welcomes members of the team and has expressed willingness to grant for most of them the necessary visas immediately. While recognising that Syria is exercising its sovereign rights and this is not unprecedented, my delegation invites both sides to solve the issue with good faith and according to the previous practice. My delegation is of the view that the continuation of the ongoing cooperation between Syria and the Technical Secretariat within a mutually agreed framework of collaboration would be helpful to resolve the remaining outstanding issues.

In this vein, we are of the view that a high-level meeting between the Syrian authorities and the Director-General of the Organisation could be a decent opportunity to address the issues.

It should be stressed that the accreditation process for non-governmental organisations, whose activities or interests are demonstrably relevant to the object and purpose of the Convention to attend the Conference of States Parties should be in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Conference (Rule 33) and the current practice of the Organisation. Rule 33 has been properly serving the purpose of the Organisation specially preventing it from being used as a political platform. In addition, it should be noted that the OPCW is an international inter-governmental organisation, hence, the Non-Governmental Organisations have no status in the Organisation, and their participation fully depends on the permission of the States Parties.

As the Fifth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (Fifth Review Conference) approaches, the Islamic Republic of Iran hopes that the Organisation will return to its previous successful path with collective wisdom. To this end, all efforts should be made to avoid further politicisation and to pave the way to mutual understanding and cooperation. In the same vein, the Organisation must leave this heavy burden and adhere to its original mandate bestowed in the Convention as a professional and technical Organisation. The Organisation should maintain impartiality and professionalism, perform its functions in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, and remain vigilant against any abuse of rights and powers under the Convention. The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that preserving the tradition of consensus, avoiding politicisation, and the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Convention, promoting universality, enhancing international cooperation on peaceful uses of chemistry, and reinforcing national and international capabilities on assistance and protection are the best ways to strengthen the global norm against chemical weapons use.

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

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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