



**INDIA**

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Reenat Sandhu  
Permanent Representative of the Republic of India to the OPCW**

**28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of State Parties**  
27 November – 1 December 2023

**Mr. Chairperson,**

1. Indian delegation welcomes you as the Chair of the 28th session of the Conference of State Parties. We assure you of our full cooperation and support for the successful conclusion of the 28<sup>th</sup> session of the CSP. We would also like to convey our appreciation to the Technical Secretariat, led by Director-General Fernando Arias for their commitment towards implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.
2. India attaches utmost importance to the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We welcome the destruction of all declared stockpiles of chemical weapons in July 2023 and emphasize that universal adherence to the Convention should remain the top priority for the OPCW. A world free from chemical weapons can only be ensured by scrupulous prevention of re-emergence of chemical weapons.
3. As the original signatory to the Convention, India supports all efforts to achieve its universality and urges the States that are not Parties to join the Convention at the earliest.
4. The discovery of new toxic chemicals, technological advancements in the deployment and dissemination of chemical weapons and threat posed by non-State actors is a cause of serious concern. We believe that full and effective national implementation by States Parties will help to address these challenges and secure the global supply chains of chemicals. India is presently partnering with Kenya under the OPCW's mentorship programme and looks forward to the first bilateral visit in this regard. We also stand ready to share our experience on national implementation with other interested States.

5. India is of the view that as confidence building measures between States Parties, Article VI inspections should continue to be implemented in a manner which avoids hampering the economic or technological development of States Parties. India underlines the importance of adapting the verification and inspection regime, in light of the growing chemical industry and rapid advancements in science and technology. We appreciate the discussions under the Industry Cluster facilitation and the consensus reached on frequency of inspections at Schedule 2B plant sites. We hope that State Parties will continue discussions to review the risk assessment methodology for Schedule III and OCPF facilities.

6. India remains firmly opposed to any use or threat of use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anybody and under any circumstances. We reiterate the need for impartial and objective investigation into any use of chemical weapons by the OPCW to establish the facts and reach evidence-based conclusions. However, this should be done strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention, while respecting the delicate balance of power and responsibilities enshrined under it.

7. India has consistently encouraged engagement between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Technical Secretariat to resolve all outstanding issues. We welcome the 25th round of consultations between the Technical Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic with the full participation of the Declaration Assessment Team. We hope both sides will continue to work in this constructive spirit.

8. India supports peaceful uses of chemical technology and the enhancement of International Cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention. We believe that international cooperation activities under the OPCW can play a crucial role in enhancing capabilities of States Parties to fully implement the Convention. Since 2018, Indian Institute of Chemical Technology has collaborated with the Technical Secretariat for conducting Analytical Skills Development Course. 124 participants from 50 States Parties have benefitted from the training, so far.

9. India stands ready to contribute to the ChemTech Centre's capacity building activities. We encourage the ChemTech Centre to build a global network of stakeholders from academia, chemical industry, research centres and laboratories for enhancing outreach and effectiveness of its work.

10. India was happy to participate in the Table Top Exercise organized by the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, underlining our support for all efforts of the OPCW to develop best practices in the area of chemical safety and security, especially the counter-terrorism aspects of international trade in chemicals.

11. This CSP has the important task of approving the Budget of OPCW for 2024-2025. While we recognize the need for adequate funding for the organization to carry out the essential tasks under the Convention, we have to be mindful of the spillover effects of global inflation which have disproportionately impacted the developing countries and we must ensure adequate funding for International Cooperation programmes. We encourage the Technical Secretariat to make efforts to enhance efficiencies in the administration and management of the organization.

12. India is happy to note the follow-up on discussions held during the Fifth Review Conference. My delegation welcomes the extensive discussions that took place in the Working Group on Geographical Representation. We reiterate the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible, and improve geographical representation within the composition of the Technical Secretariat. We look forward to supporting further work in the preparation of a strategic framework and implementation programme.

13. We take note of the discussions at the Facilitation on Tenure Policy. We are happy to note that the discussions took into account the fact that OPCW is a non-career organisation and any decisions in this regard should not change the basic nature of this organisation.

14. Finally, India would like to emphasize the importance of consensus and the need for all decisions to be taken by the States Parties in consultation with each other and in a spirit of cooperation. Let us channel our collective efforts towards a constructive and holistic approach and encourage dialogue, consultation and consensus building to take forward the mandate of the Convention.

15. 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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