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THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

**STATEMENT BY MR GHOLAMHOSSEIN DEGHANI, SECRETARY OF THE
NATIONAL AUTHORITY FOR THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION, AT THE
FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Distinguished representatives,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Please allow me, Mr Chairperson, to begin by congratulating you on your well-deserved election as the Chairperson of this august body. I am confident that with your diplomatic skills and leadership, our deliberations at this session of the Conference will come to a successful conclusion.

I would like to express my appreciation for the endeavours of the former Chairperson of the Conference, H.E. Ambassador Minoru Shibuya of Japan. I also thank the Director-General, Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter, and his colleagues in the Technical Secretariat for their efforts in preparations for this session of the Conference.

Mr Chairperson,

Coming to the agenda before us, let me first associate myself with the statement made by H.E. Ambassador Oscar Ramos of Cuba on behalf of the NAM CWC States Parties and China.

The international community has paid dearly for reaching an agreement on the Convention as the unique global disarmament instrument. The negotiations during which the Convention was concluded were inspired by the shocking memories of mankind of the use of different types of weapons of mass destruction during the twentieth century. The most recent example of barbarism of the modern times was the massive use of chemical weapons against the Iranian military and the civilian population during the invasion of Iran by the former regime of Iraq.

These inhumane attacks left about 100,000 dead or chemically-wounded casualties. To learn about this horrifying experience, you are kindly invited to pay a visit to the photo exhibition organised to this effect in the lobby of the World Forum Convention Centre by the Iranian victims of chemical weapons.



With the connivance of some developed States, the former regime of Iraq was equipped with the different types of chemical weapons which led to such a horrific tragedy. Unfortunately, more than 20 years after this tragedy those individuals and companies from some developed States who helped the former regime of Iraq to commit such atrocities are yet to be brought to justice.

Looking at the pictures of the wounds of the victims of chemical weapons and talking to those who are still trying to survive in the face of gradual painful death, helps you to have a better understanding that our unsparing efforts aimed at full implementation of the Convention stem from the very bitter experience in our recent history, which goes far beyond a mere legal undertaking.

Mr Chairperson,

We are holding this Conference almost 13 years after the entry into force of the Convention. The Convention has four pillars, namely:

- Destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles;
- Assistance and protection against the use or threat of use of chemical weapons against States Parties;
- Promotion of international cooperation amongst States Parties in the field of the peaceful use of chemistry;
- Verification of activities not prohibited under the Convention.

Mr Chairperson,

Complete destruction of chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities is most essential for realisation of the object and purpose of the Convention. Unfortunately, the original deadline of 29 April 2007 set for implementation of this important provision was missed, and upon request by the possessor States, the Eleventh Session of the Conference made a very difficult decision to grant the possessor States Parties the extended deadlines.

We appreciate the efforts by those possessor States Parties who complied with their obligation in this regard within their respective deadlines. However, this important provision of the Convention is yet to be implemented. With the final extended deadline of 29 April 2012 approaching, the recent alarming indication by the United States of America that it may not be able to meet the final extended deadline for the complete destruction of its chemical weapons stockpiles has become a source of serious concern.

Possessor States Parties have an unequivocal commitment to destroy their chemical weapons within the deadlines stipulated in the Convention. This commitment is not just a theoretical obligation. There would be obvious moral, political, and legal consequences for deviating from such an essential commitment. Any breach of the provisions of the Convention would consequently endanger the trust which exists among States Parties. We should avoid sowing the seeds of mistrust by allowing the breach of the Convention, which is detrimental to realisation of the goals of the Convention. Recognising the fundamental importance of this obligation, no justification of non-compliance with this undertaking, under various pretexts by a State Party, would be permissible.

The OPCW decision-making organs, especially the Conference of the States Parties, have a significant role in ensuring compliance of possessor States Parties with their obligations.

The Executive Council has mandated its Chairperson to conduct consultations on this important issue. We are of the firm belief that working groups should be established to not only consider different aspects of this issue, including legal and technical aspects, but also to discuss and recommend concrete measures to ensure compliance of possessor States Parties with the final extended deadline of 29 April 2012 for destruction of their chemical weapons.

Time is of essence, and we have a joint responsibility to engage in this process in good faith to ensure the success of the Organisation.

Mr Chairperson,

Article X of the Convention as one of the unique legal frameworks for promotion of collective security through global joint efforts was actually the major motive for many of the States Parties to join the Convention. Provisions of this article remain the driving force for promotion of the universality of the Convention due to the protection and assistance that it provides to its States Parties.

The efficiency and readiness of the Organisation in responding to requests for assistance, especially with regard to the needs of the victims of chemical weapons, are of utmost importance as stipulated in various documents adopted by its policy-making organs.

We should not forget that the state of readiness to be achieved by the Organisation could not be realised without reliable resources being made available to the Organisation by States Parties, and those States Parties in a position to do so should take responsibility in this regard.

The invaluable experience of Iran in treating victims of chemical weapons has been repeatedly offered to the States Parties through regular courses organised by the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW. The last course of this kind was held last year in Tehran with participation of medical doctors from the States Parties.

We have made this offer of assistance available to the Organisation through a contract which makes it much more reliable in nature than the other existing offers and we invite other States Parties also to do so.

The Executive Council has been mandated by the Conference to explore concrete measures for implementation of Article X. We are looking forward to receiving the recommendations of the Executive Council on this issue.

Mr Chairperson,

Another important pillar of the Convention is the promotion of free trade and cooperation among the States Parties in the field of peaceful use of chemistry as envisaged in Article XI as well as in the preamble to the Convention.

Despite this provision, we are witnessing that for political reasons certain Member States are applying double standards by imposing arbitrary extra conventional restrictions on exchange of technology, material, and equipment for peaceful purposes against other States Parties

whose activities under the verification mechanism of the Convention and their compliance with their obligations have always been certified by the OPCW. In this regard, we emphasise the importance of realisation of paragraph 2(e) of Article XI of the Convention.

Unfortunately, restrictions are being imposed on States Parties, while the Zionist regime, whose non-adherence to the Convention is a source of serious concern, in the very sensitive region of the Middle East, has been provided with free access to materials to which some of the developing States Parties have no uninhibited access.

Recalling the mandate given to the Executive Council to explore all options and submit to the Conference for its consideration concrete measures for the full implementation of Article XI, we appreciate the efforts made by the facilitator for Article XI, Mr Chen Kai of China, and we are looking forward to seeing the result of the work of the Council in this regard as a matter of priority.

With ever-increasing needs of the developing countries as well as a number of States Parties, the Organisation shall allocate within its regular budget additional resources to enhance the activities of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division to meet the needs of developing States Parties.

We appreciate and encourage voluntary contributions by States Parties for the activities conducted by the ICA. However, we are of the firm belief that the programmes of the ICA must rely on the regular budget of the Organisation to ensure predictability of the resources as well as to enable the Organisation to prioritise its activities as mandated by the policy-making organs.

With the increasing needs of developing Member States, we should have sufficient and reasonable resources allocated for the programmes of the ICA within the regular budget.

Mr Chairperson,

I should say that in the face of such shortcomings, fortunately we have had significant achievements in implementing Article VI and some other provisions of the Convention, in particular, Article VII. We are pleased that, since the entry into force, the Organisation has been able to verify in States Parties, activities that are not prohibited under the Convention in an efficient and successful manner, which we owe to the efforts of the Technical Secretariat and to the cooperation of all States Parties.

In light of the above-mentioned facts, we are of the firm belief that balanced implementation of the Convention should be our guiding principle in our work in order to ensure the achievement of the object and purpose of the Convention.

Mr Chairperson,

In terms of tenure policy, my delegation is of the view that staff recruitment at the Technical Secretariat shall be subject to the highest standards of transparency, fairness, competence, efficiency, integrity, merit, as well as equitable geographical representation as stipulated in the Convention.

Some representatives may assign paramount consideration to merit rather than equitable geographic representation, arguing that the staff with merit is preferable to geographical representation whereas one may just as well argue that people with merit can be found in any geographical representation. Hence, my delegation is of the belief that a combination of both merit and geographical representation should be given due consideration, particularly at the managerial level.

Last but not least, I would like to turn to the important issue of the appointment of the next Director-General of the OPCW.

We appreciate the efforts made by the outgoing Director-General, H.E. Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter, during his tenure. We wish him every success in his future endeavours.

As for the incoming Director-General, Ambassador Üzümcü, may I add the felicitations of my delegation to the many he has already received on his appointment to the position of Director-General. This is the sort of appointment that inspires confidence in the OPCW. It seems to me that the States Parties to the OPCW should also be congratulated on their choice. I am confident that Ambassador Üzümcü will be a credit to those who supported him. I would also like to assure him of the full support and cooperation of my delegation. We are confident that with the support and cooperation of all the States Parties, the incoming Director-General will be able to promote the implementation of the Convention in a balanced manner. The good offices of the Director-General could play a significant role in bridging the gaps in the different views of the States Parties regarding the implementation of provisions of the Convention.

In conclusion, may I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Fourteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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