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**IRAN**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. KAZEM GHARIB ABADI AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO THE OPCW AT THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,

Please allow me to begin by congratulating Your Excellency, Dr Sa'ad Abdul Majeed Ibrahim Al-Ali, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Iraq on your well deserved election as Chairperson of this Conference. I am confident that under your able leadership, this Conference will be steered to a successful conclusion. I also wish to express my appreciation to Ambassador Peter Goosen of South Africa for all his efforts as Chairperson of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. I would also like to associate myself with the policy statement delivered by H.E Seyed Abaas Araghchi, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the NAM CWC States Parties and China.

My delegation extends its appreciation to the Director-General for his efforts during the past four years to promote the role of the Organisation in the international disarmament regime and to carry out its functions under the Convention and assisting the Conference and the Executive Council in the performance of their functions.

We express our full support on the appointment of the Director-General for a second term. As representative of the last and biggest victim of chemical weapons, I would also like to congratulate the States Parties, the OPCW, the Director-General and his colleagues on receiving this year's Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the Organisation.

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

The Islamic Republic of Iran values the achievements of the Organisation in the past 16 years. The Organisation owes its success to the victims of chemical weapons, on the one hand, and a well-defined Convention which totally rejects the existence of chemical weapons on the other. While the Organisation works towards a world free of chemical weapons it shall not forget to remedy the chemical weapons victims' situation. Thanks goes out to the Director-General and the States Parties for their efforts and goodwill to approve the decision to convey an annual message to the victims of Sardasht, erect a monument for the victims of



chemical weapons in the headquarters of the OPCW, and to establish an international support network for the victims; but there is still an urgent need to take practical steps:

- (a) The States Parties are requested to facilitate and make materials and equipment-related assistance available to other States Parties to assist and support the victims of chemical weapons, without undue restrictions, as recommended by the Third Review Conference;
- (b) The States Parties are requested to contribute to the voluntary trust fund of the network to show their solidarity with the victims of chemical weapons and to enhance the humanitarian aims of the Network. There are legitimate expectations by the victims that countries who equipped Saddam's regime with chemical weapons now have the obligation to compensate their internationally wrongful actions;
- (c) To ensure that chemical weapons will not be produced and used again, the providers of those inhumane weapons should be exposed to the international community for being held accountable for assisting Saddam's regime to commit such heinous crimes.

Existence of chemical weapons threatens international peace and security and undermines the integrity and credibility of the Convention. Therefore, total destruction of all chemical weapons stockpiles is a fundamental pillar of the Convention and continues to remain the key objective of the Convention and the top priority of the Organisation. The major possessor States Parties shall comply with their obligations and accelerate their efforts, within the framework of the Convention and its verification regimes, to destroy all chemical weapons stockpiles in the shortest time possible.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a main victim of the contemporary use of chemical weapons, firmly underlines that the use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances would be reprehensible and completely contrary to the legal norms and standards of the international community.

The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the decision of the Syrian Arab Republic to accede to the Convention, and has declared its readiness to share its experiences with Syria as a new member to the Convention implementing its obligations under the Convention. According to the reports of the Technical Secretariat and the general assessment of the process, Syria has shown its full cooperation with the Organisation with a view to implementing the decisions of the Executive Council and provisions of the Convention. My delegation takes this opportunity to welcome the cooperative and positive approach of the Syrian Arab Republic in this process.

According to the decisions adopted by the Executive Council on the destruction of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, the transfer of chemical weapons for destruction outside Syria was only taken into consideration by the Executive Council upon the request of Syria explaining its reasons in the detailed destruction plan; namely the lack of necessary equipment, financial resources, and a secure environment in Syria. These decisions are also subject to robust verification activities by the OPCW with respect to the destruction of chemical weapons outside of Syria. Therefore, as recognised by the Executive Council these decisions were made due to the extraordinary character of the situation in Syria and shall not set a precedent for the future.

The issue of a State Party hosting chemical weapons for their destruction in any place under its control or jurisdiction is of high importance. The host country shall have the necessary requirements, capabilities and infrastructure and high standards with respect to safety and security. The implementation of the decisions of the Executive Council mostly depends on the host country and the OPCW to provide assurance to the States Parties that the destruction process outside Syria is under stringent verification measures. The fundamental objective of this process shall be the immediate destruction of the chemical weapons, rather than their immediate transfer, otherwise the chemical weapons will only be proliferated. In this context every party engaged in this process has responsibilities and obligations.

Given the importance attached to the universal adherence to the Convention and its contribution to international peace and security, we expect other non-members to the Convention, especially the Israeli regime, to accede to it without further delay or precondition. The Israeli's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) arsenals are the main source of concern and are a threat to the regional and international peace and security. Given the accession of Syria in the Middle East region to the Convention, there is no justification and excuse for Israel to stay out of disarmament treaties, including the Chemical Weapons Convention, and to maintain and develop its WMD stockpiles. The international community should exert pressure on this regime to accede to the Convention and put its facilities under the OPCW verification regime.

Mr Chairperson,

Article XI is one of the major pillars of the Convention. The aim of this article is to promote free trade of chemicals and chemical equipment among States Parties. Needless to say that agreement in this article has been one of the primary motives of developing countries to join the Convention as well. Unfortunately, almost 16 years after entry into force of the Convention and in spite of the provisions of Article XI and the related decisions by the Conference of the States Parties, the commitments of the States Parties in this field have not been fully met. My delegation expresses the firm conviction that a plan of action may ensure the full implementation of Article XI. In this context, a proposal was made by the NAM CWC States Parties and China to the Third Review Conference, which is to be considered during Article XI consultations.

Allocation of adequate financial and human resources by the Technical Secretariat, adopting necessary actions or decisions to implement the relevant recommendations of the Third Review Conference, promotion of international cooperation and removal of any discriminatory restrictions, such as unilateral sanctions against other States Parties that are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Convention, are essential for full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of Article XI.

In closing, Mr Chairperson, may I request that this statement be circulated as an official statement of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.