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**SRI LANKA**

**STATEMENT BY MS WATHSALA INDUNIL AMARASINGHE  
SECOND SECRETARY AND DEPUTY-PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF SRI LANKA TO THE OPCW AT THE  
NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Chairperson of the Conference of States Parties, Ambassador Vesela Mrđen Korać,  
Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by extending to Your Excellency Ambassador Vesela Mrđen Korać, sincere felicitations on behalf of my delegation, on your appointment as Chair of the Nineteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. My delegation is confident that your able leadership, wealth of knowledge and vast experience will ensure the success of this conference and strengthen the OPCW to achieve its goals and objectives. I would also like to congratulate the newly elected members of the Bureau and other officials and on behalf of my delegation I assure our fullest support and cooperation.

I also would like to take this opportunity to express our profound gratitude to the outgoing Chair of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, Ambassador Dr Sa'ad Abdul Majeed Ibrahim Al-Ali, for his dedication during the Eighteenth Session.

I also would like to express our deep appreciation to Director-General H.E. Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, for his strong leadership and also to his staff and the members of the Technical Secretariat in implementing the Convention and carrying forward its functions for a world free of chemical weapons.

As a founding member of the OPCW, Sri Lanka proudly stands with you in sharing the happiness of being awarded the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize for 2013. Sri Lanka is honoured to have worked closely with you in this remarkable achievement. This is a hallmark of the impressive journey of the OPCW since 1997 and also esteemed recognition for the excellent work it has been doing for the advancement of peace and security in the world.

As a country which has borne witness to the suffering, pain and grief caused by three decades of a ruthless campaign of terrorism, we cherish this award as an award for all peace loving countries.



My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the NAM and China by His Excellency Dr Alireza Jahangiri, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the OPCW.

Sri Lanka, as a founding party to the Convention, is firmly committed to the aspirations of the OPCW and continues to fulfil its obligations under Article VII of the Convention relating to National Implementation Measures. Sri Lanka established the National Authority for the Implementation of Chemical Weapons Convention in Sri Lanka in 2004 which comes under the Ministry of Industry & Commerce. The National Authority has rendered an impressive service by registering scheduled chemical users, issuing import/export recommendations, assisting chemical emergencies, carrying out awareness programmes for the industrialists who are engaged in the trading of the scheduled chemicals and adopting necessary measures to ensure that toxic schedules, chemicals and their precursors are only used for peaceful purposes. The Sri Lanka National Authority has successfully organised many training programmes and workshops in educating parties who are engaged in the chemical industry, both at the national and regional level. On this occasion, I am pleased to inform you that Sri Lanka is ready to host the seminar on the Chemical Weapons Convention and safety and security management for the member countries of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to be held from 17-19 December 2014.

As a country which eradicated thirty years of ruthless terrorism, we recognise the significance of the Convention in creating a healthier and safer world for all of us to live. Since the Convention is founded on the premise that the States Parties to the Convention are “determined for the sake of all mankind, to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons, through the implementation of the provisions of the Convention”, we believe that global cooperation is imperative for effective implementation of the Convention. In this context, it is imperative that the international community ensures that the fruits of advancement of the chemical industry will not fall into the hands of terrorists, which could have cascading catastrophic consequences for all States. In this context, Sri Lanka remains committed not only to its obligations to the Convention and in particular, to not allowing its soil as a breeding ground for any form of terrorism that could lead to destabilising its hard won peace, under the able leadership of His Excellency the President Mahinda Rajapaksa .

We hereby would like to appreciate the impressive progress achieved by the OPCW with regard to the elimination and destruction of chemical weapons in Syria. While appreciating the cooperation of the Syrian authorities for this tremendous effort, we insist that non-discriminatory and full implementation of the Convention remains crucial for achieving its most cherished goals.

In this context, we urge the possessor States Parties to honour their responsibilities as agreed upon in the Convention to comply with prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction including chemical weapons stockpiles, old chemical weapons and abandoned chemical weapons within the stipulated timeframe to maintain the credibility of the Convention.

It is undoubtedly true that OPCW, with 190 countries, serves as the global platform to stand against the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer and use of chemical weapons. However, my delegation is of the view that the composition of the Executive Council with only 41 countries would be a disadvantage in steering the OPCW deliberations forward as the seats are always secured only among a few selected number of countries,

which hinders universal participation in decision-making and undermines confidence. We urge all the Member States to honour the sovereign rights of every country and create a more constructive participation at the Executive Council by ensuring a roster in which every country receives a chance to serve in the Executive Council in a democratic manner. Traditions and precedence of selective approaches will certainly keep us away from our most desired goals by allowing polarisation in this prestigious international organisation, which is absolutely contradictory to the noble norms upon which the Organisation was established.

In conclusion my delegation would like to reiterate the necessity of establishing a transparent and well balanced approach in implementing the Convention and should not entertain selective and privileged mechanisms.

While reaffirming our strong commitment to the Convention, I wish to request that this statement be considered as an official document of the Nineteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

Thank you Madam Chairperson.

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