



1 December 2015

**Statement by
Ambassador J.S.Mukul
Permanent Representative of India to the OPCW to the
20th Session of the Conference of States Parties
30 November-4 December 2015**

Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Director General,
Distinguished Delegates,

First of all, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to offer warm felicitations to the distinguished Ambassador of Mexico on assuming the Chair of the 20th Session of the Conference of States Parties. My delegation is confident, Mr. Chairman, that with you at the helm, the deliberations of this Conference will be ably steered. We would also like to congratulate the newly elected Bureau Members and other officers.

May I also take this opportunity to convey my delegation's deep appreciation for the outstanding work done by the distinguished

Ambassador of Croatia as the Chair of the 19th Session of the Conference of States Parties.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the role of the Director General and the Technical Secretariat for the efforts they have made in the implementation of the Convention and for advancing the common goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

My delegation endorses and associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the NAM CWC States Parties and China.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the 19th session of the Conference of States Parties, one of the most significant developments has been the entry of two more countries namely Myanmar and Angola into our fold. India warmly welcomes them as States Parties to the Convention. We hope that this would encourage other non-member countries to join the Convention in order to achieve our shared goal of universality of the CWC.

Mr. Chairman,

India views the Chemical Weapons Convention as a unique, non-discriminatory disarmament instrument which serves as a model for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. The guiding principle in the Convention is “no use”. The

Chemical Weapons Convention is non-discriminatory and international verification is built into it.

Mr. Chairman,

India attaches great importance to full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention. All chemical weapons must be destroyed. Destruction of chemical weapons is the most important undertaking made by every State Party to the Convention. We urge all remaining possessor States to take the necessary steps to expedite their destruction process at the earliest.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the last Conference, commendable work has been done in the matter of elimination of Syria's chemical weapons programme. This task is now almost complete and destruction of only some residual chemicals and one production facility remains. What is most gratifying is that the very difficult task of elimination of Syria's chemical weapons has been carried out mostly in an atmosphere of cooperation and by consensus. My delegation believes that it is important that this spirit should prevail as the remaining tasks are completed expeditiously.

Mr. Chairman,

It has been India's consistent position that use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anybody, at any time and under any circumstances cannot be justified. Accordingly, my delegation is

deeply concerned with the recent report of the Fact Finding Mission (FFM) that chemical weapons have been used in the ongoing conflict in Syria. The use of chemical weapons in complete disregard of humanity is reprehensible and completely contrary to the provisions of the Convention and accepted international legal norms. My delegation reiterates our strong condemnation of the abhorrent use of chemical weapons on Syrian territory. The possibility of such chemical weapons having been used by non-state actors is a matter of very grave concern, even alarm, given recent acts of terrorism. We have also noted the establishment of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). My delegation expects that the JIM will carry out its mandate in an objective and professional manner and perpetrators of such abhorrent acts would be held accountable.

Mr. Chairman,

The emergence of non-state actors clouds the chemical disarmament landscape and poses a real challenge for all of us. Therefore, renewed vigilance against possible use and re-emergence of chemical weapons becomes more important. In this regard, the emphasis given by the Technical Secretariat on Education and Outreach is a welcome step and we look forward to having the Advisory Body on Education and Outreach (ABEO) in position soon.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation attaches importance to national implementation. We are happy that the Technical Secretariat is actively encouraging and assisting States Parties to implement Article VII more effectively. We propose that a universal review of national implementation be carried out by CSP 2020. Further, State Parties in need of assistance for national implementation should continue to be helped by OPCW. India is happy to share its knowledge and experience in implementing Article VII of the Convention and to work with other States Parties and Technical Secretariat towards this end.

Mr. Chairman,

Promoting peaceful uses of chemistry is an important mandate of the Convention under Article XI. Chemical technologies offer solutions for many a problem confronting the world especially those being faced by the less affluent and marginalised section of societies – providing safe drinking water, fighting pestilence, mitigating environmental pollution, recycling of wastes, sanitation, to name a few. Technologies should not only be available but also accessible as well as affordable. On the technological firmament, diffusion is as important as innovation. Building national capacities and promoting network among scientific communities are two promising areas for the OPCW to concentrate in real and meaningful manner. It should also be the aim of all stake holders of the Chemical Weapons Convention to ensure the fullest possible exchange of chemicals,

equipment, scientific and technical information for the peaceful uses of chemistry and sustenance and further development of our civilization. Therefore, the emphasis given by the Technical Secretariat for strengthening the implementation of Article XI is a timely and welcome step. We hope that the discussion on the proposals submitted by all the State Parties would be held in an atmosphere of trust and co-operation which would yield concrete results.

Mr. Chairman,

India attaches importance to the work of the OPCW Scientific Advisory Board. In recent report of the SAB, a set of 18 recommendations has now been proposed as to how new challenges in verification could be met for detailed consideration and eventual adoption. Each of these recommendations has to be carefully assessed in terms of conformity with the provisions of the Convention. Any change that may be considered to be brought about in current or prevailing verification methodology will need to be crafted in such a way that the needs of the Convention as regards transparency are met without compromising the requirements of the States Parties as regards confidentiality of commercial and technical information. We are hopeful that these recommendations will be subject to detailed deliberations and decisions arrived at consensually.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, my delegation will like to assure you of our fullest co-operation for the success of this Conference.

I would request that this Statement be circulated as an official document of the Conference and placed on OPCW's public website.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
