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ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DR ALIREZA JAHANGIRI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN
TO THE OPCW AT THE
TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,

I would like to congratulate your Excellency, Ambassador Edurado Ibarrola-Nicolín of Mexico on your well-deserved election as the Chairperson of this Conference. I am confident that under your able leadership, this Conference will be steered to a successful conclusion. I assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation. I would also like to express my appreciation to Her Excellency Ambassador Vesela Mrđen Korać of Croatia, for her endeavours as the Chairperson of the Nineteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

I would also like to extend my delegation's appreciation to the Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü and his colleagues in the Technical Secretariat for their efforts and excellent arrangements in preparations for this Conference.

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

I wish to express my sincere congratulations to Professor Mahdi Balali-Mood, an Iranian eminent toxicologist who has been selected as a recipient of the second annual OPCW-The Hague Award by the selection committee of the 2015 Award. Professor Balali-Mood has dedicated his long career to treatment of the victims of chemical weapons in the Islamic Republic of Iran. This proves the winners' scientific endeavours and shows the positive approach of the OPCW towards victims of chemical weapons. I also congratulate Dr Alastair Hay of the United Kingdom of Great and Britain and Northern Ireland as co-recipient of this Award.

Mr Chairperson,
H.E. Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,



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 chemical weapons against the Islamic Republic of Iran during the twentieth century. The international community is well aware that the active participation of the Islamic Republic of Iran in international negotiations for formulating the Convention was rooted in a very bitter experience in our recent history as the main victim of chemical weapons.

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons since its inception has been an exemplary multilateral forum based on the Chemical Weapons Convention, in which all States Parties enjoy equal rights. All the efforts aimed at progress and gradual development of this Organisation towards the realisation of a world free of chemical weapons are commendable.

The existence of chemical weapons poses a significant threat to the 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 Islamic Republic of Iran remains seriously concerned that major possessor States Parties have not complied with this fundamental obligation of the Convention. 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 values the achievements of the Organisation in the past 18 years in this regard and emphasises that complete destruction of all categories of chemical weapons stockpiles continues to remain the most essential element for realisation of the object and purpose of the Convention.

The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to the Organisation and its future development which is of the utmost importance for its effectiveness. However, we should bear in mind that changes of any kind in the structure and activities of the Organisation shall not lead to its diversion from the main core objective, namely disarmament. In this regard, we would like to stress that since significant amounts of chemical weapons stockpiles, old and abandoned chemical weapons are yet to be destroyed, the primary mandate of the Organisation is the total destruction and complete elimination of all categories of chemical weapons.

I would like to emphasise, on the proposal made by the NAM CWC States Parties and China to consider the establishment of a Working Group, to discuss and formulate a document on the future priorities of the OPCW to be adopted at the Fourth Review Conference. This Working Group should consult all States Parties to the Convention regarding all aspects of the Convention.

The Islamic Republic of Iran supported the Syrian Arab Republic's accession to the Convention and shared its experiences with the Syrian Arab Republic to implement its obligations under the Convention. In this regard, during the last two years the National Authority of the Islamic Republic of Iran has established a close cooperation with the Syrian National Authority. We have organised training courses for the Syrian experts in Tehran and Damascus, for those involved in implementation of the Convention, with the support of the Technical Secretariat in the framework of the mentorship programme.

My delegation welcomes the substantive progress achieved in the destruction process of the Syrian chemical weapons and is pleased with the level of cooperation that the Syrian Arab Republic demonstrates with the Technical Secretariat to solve the remaining issues and to fulfil its obligations under the Convention. I congratulate the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic for its determination and achievement to eliminate its chemical weapons.

We believe that the Syrian Government, despite facing a difficult security situation has shown its commitment to meet its obligations in a cooperative and transparent manner, so it should be treated with an ordinary approach as a normal Member State.

With regard to the cooperation between the OPCW and the United Nations and the establishment of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), we believe that the characteristic of independent and autonomy of the OPCW should be preserved in any kind of cooperation with other international organisations. My delegation expects the JIM to fulfil its mandate in a professional, objective and impartial manner. We believe that the Executive Council should also play its important role in this process and urge the JIM to coordinate technical aspects of its activities with the OPCW.

The international community recently has witnessed the use of toxic chemicals by terrorist groups in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as the major victim of the contemporary use of chemical weapons, firmly believes that the use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the legal norms and standards of the international community. The acquisition of chemical weapons by terrorist groups threatens the international peace and security. We believe that the perpetrators and those who assisted terrorist groups, to acquire such capabilities, must be held accountable. My country call upon all States Parties to refrain from providing any financial, logistical and military support to those terrorist groups and make every effort to prevent them from accessing any kind of toxic chemical substances.

My delegation would like to welcome and congratulate Myanmar and Angola as new members of the Chemical Weapons Convention, bringing the number of States Parties to 192. In fact, new memberships are paving the way towards real universality of the Convention. The objectives of the Convention will not be fully realised as long as there remains even a single State Not Party that could possess or acquire chemical weapons. Given the importance attached to the universal adherence to the Convention and its contribution to international peace and security, we expect other non-State actors to the Convention to accede to it without further delay or precondition.

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 technology 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 18 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 met yet. In fact, Article XI which articulates all critical areas of cooperation regarding facilitating the fullest possible exchange of chemicals, equipment and technical information in the field of chemistry for peaceful purposes will generate stronger support for the overall goals of the Convention. International cooperation from another point of view is one of the important issues in order to enhance national implementation and to promote the capacity building of States Parties. While my delegation expresses the firm conviction that a plan of

action may ensure the full implementation of Article XI, it calls upon the States Parties to remove any discriminatory restrictions such as unilateral sanctions, against other States Parties or restrictions beyond the Chemical Weapons Convention provisions for the States Parties which affect the Convention's long-term viability and have an adverse impact on the trust existing among the States Parties.

My delegation appreciates recent efforts made by the Technical Secretariat in the field of Article XI based on States Parties' proposals including NAM CWC States Parties and China proposal on the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI and looks forward to more consultation between the Technical Secretariat and States Parties in this regard. We also welcome the appointment of the new facilitator for this Article.

While the Organisation works towards a world free of chemical weapons, we shall not forget to work to remedy the chemical weapons victims' situation. The Islamic Republic of Iran would like to express its appreciation to the States Parties and the Director-General for their efforts and goodwill to sympathise with the victims of chemical weapons by adopting a decision to establish the International Support Network for Victims and contributions to the voluntary trust fund of the network. The States Parties also are requested to contribute to the trust fund to show their solidarity with the victims of chemical weapons and to enhance the humanitarian aims of the network. We hope with the adequate resources of the trust fund, the Technical Secretariat would be able to realise its mandate according to the decision adopted.

Article X is a unique legal framework for promotion of collective security through global joint efforts and is a major guarantee for the States Parties to effectively respond to any chemical weapons attack. The readiness of the Organisation to deliver assistance, especially with regard to the needs of the victims of chemical weapons is of the utmost importance as stipulated in various documents adopted by the policy-making organs. My delegation believes that well-organised efforts with adequate resources for implementation of the provisions of Article X and achievement of a consistent status of readiness by the Organisation for responding to requests for assistance, particularly with regard to the needs of victims of chemical weapons, are crucial for the realisation of the objectives of the Convention. Full implementation of this article can only be reached through maintaining the highest possible standards of coordination and readiness for delivery of assistance by the Organisation and States Parties as well. I am pleased to remind you that the International Centre for Treatment of Victims of chemical weapons in Tehran has been made available to the OPCW through the agreement which was concluded between Islamic Republic of Iran and the Organisation under paragraph 7 of Article X of the Convention.

In closing, Mr Chairperson, may I request that this statement to be circulated as an official statement of the Twentieth Session of the Conference and be posted on both the external server and the public website.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.