



28 November 2016

**Statement by  
Ambassador J.S.Mukul  
Permanent Representative of India to the OPCW to the  
21<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of States Parties  
28 November - 2 December 2016**

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 Germany on assuming the Chair of the 21<sup>st</sup> 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 Mexico as the Chair of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of NAM States Parties to the CWC and China. My delegation also commends the excellent work done by the distinguished Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran as Chair of the NAM States Parties to the CWC and China.

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. In a short span,

CWC has been remarkably successful in attaining near universality. We urge the remaining States that are not Parties to the Convention to consider acceding to the Convention at the earliest.

Mr. Chairman,

India attaches great importance to full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention. Complete destruction of all declared chemical weapons remains an important objective. We urge all States Parties to expedite their destruction process of chemical weapons stockpiles.

To this end, Mr. Chairman, my delegation welcomes the completion of destruction of Syrian chemical weapons and progress made so far in the matter of destruction of Syria's chemical weapons production facilities. We hope that the remaining task of destruction will be completed in the earliest possible time.

We have taken note of the Director General's report pursuant to consultations with senior representatives of Syria as well as the reports of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT). While we recognize and appreciate the progress achieved in clarifying the gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies under challenging circumstances, we would encourage further consultations with an aim to fully resolve the outstanding issues in a spirit of trust and cooperation.

My delegation has studied the Reports of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) and we are extremely concerned with the findings of the JIM regarding the use of chemical weapons in Syria. As the JIM is a United Nations-led mechanism constituted pursuant to the UN Security Council Resolution 2235(2015), we await the final outcome of discussions at the UNSC on JIM reports. My delegation was disappointed at the lack of consensus at EC-82 and EC-83 on Syria. Meanwhile, we have noted the decision of EC-83 dated 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016 on Syria adopted by voting procedure. We expect that this will not set any precedent for future decision-making in the Organization.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation is deeply concerned with reports of acquisitions of chemical weapons and their delivery system by the so-called 'Islamic State' or ISIS/ISIL and continuous use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals in Syria and Iraq by terrorists. We believe that our work in the OPCW should help to eliminate the possibility of any future use of chemical weapons.

It has been our consistent position that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at anytime, by anybody, under any circumstances cannot be justified and the perpetrators of such abhorrent acts must be held accountable.

Mr. Chairman,

On Libya, my delegation welcomes the relevant EC decisions and UNSCR 2298 (2016) which paved the way for successful removal of the remaining Category 2 chemical weapons stockpiles from Libya for their destruction abroad. We can take satisfaction from the progress achieved based on consensus decisions. We would like to compliment Libya and other States Parties involved for their efforts in this context under challenging circumstances. We hope that the destruction of the removed Libyan chemical weapons will be completed within the stipulated time frame.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the core commitments pledged by each Member State to the Convention is to promote the peaceful uses of chemistry. Flow of chemicals and technology across national borders for peaceful purposes ought to be intensified and the provisions of the Chemical Weapon Convention should not be used for hampering these trans-national movements. This is the spirit of Article XI of the CWC and India welcomes the renewed thrust the OPCW is giving to this matter. My delegation actively participated in the Review & Evaluation Workshop on Article XI held recently which produced some fruitful results. We expect that follow-up action will be taken by all Member States to strengthen the implementation of Article XI.

Mr. Chairman,

While much success has been achieved in making the world free of chemical weapons, there is no room for complacency. Emergence of non-state actors clouds the chemical disarmament landscape and poses a serious challenge since the potential of toxic chemicals falling in the hands of non-state actors, including terrorists, is no longer a hypothetical proposition. In such a scenario, it is our view, that effective national implementation provides a bulwark against use of chemical weapons. We urge all Member States, which have not done so yet, to give priority to effective national implementation measures as contained in Article VII of the Convention. This involves both drafting and adoption of legislation as well as capacity building for effective implementation. In this context, we welcome both North-South and South-South cooperation and commend the 'Mentorship/Partnership' Program of the OPCW. India would like to reiterate its offer and stands ready to provide assistance and support to fellow Member States on request.

Mr. Chairman,

While it is true that the Convention is neither a Counter-Terrorism Treaty nor a Chemical Safety Treaty, we note that the OPCW has emerged as a forum

for consultation and cooperation between the States Parties which include exchange of ideas and discussion of best practices in the area of chemical safety and security. In this regard, my delegation notes the efforts of the Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors.

Mr. Chairman,

With regard to the Open Ended Working Group on Future Priorities (OEWG-FP) of the Organisation, my delegation notes the efforts of the two Co-Chairpersons. However, we believe that the focus of OPCW should remain on the complete elimination of all categories of chemical weapons. The work of the OEWG-FP should be States Parties-driven to address all issues related to the future of the Organisation in a balanced and comprehensive manner. We would like to see the work of this OEWG-FP progress through established channels of the policy-making organs (PMOs) without any artificial timelines and bearing in mind time-tested methods of work of our Organisation, particularly decision-making by consensus. On this basis, my delegation will continue to participate actively in the OEWG-FP to which we attach importance.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the important tasks of this Conference is the adoption of Draft Decision on Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2017. My delegation commends the Secretariat for presenting us a balanced Budget which we hope will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation values the work of the newly-created OPCW Advisory Board for Education and Outreach (ABEO). India also attaches importance to the work of the OPCW Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). We are hopeful that all the recommendations of the Advisory Boards would be subject to detailed deliberations and decisions arrived at consensually.

Mr. Chairman,

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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