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NEW DELHI, INDIA

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Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
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Mr Chairman, Director-General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Myself Animesh Roul, presently serving as the Executive Director of the New Delhi-based policy research group, the Society for the Study of Peace and Conflict (SSPC).

On behalf of my organization, I thank the OPCW and the CWC Coalition for this opportunity to speak at the plenary meeting at the CSP 22.

Mr Chairman,

As always, we at SSPC aim to carry out research, advocacy, and dissemination of information on subjects relating to arms control, non-proliferation, armed conflicts, and counterterrorism issues. Over the last few years we have been regularly publishing research works, opinion pieces, and news digests on weapons of mass destructions (CBRN) with particular focus on chemical and biological weapons and materials. We will continue our endeavours to undertake similar activities for better information dissemination within the larger strategic community and for the benefit of general readers.

Mr Chairman,

I would also like to take this opportunity to draw your attention towards some of SSPC's present activities and plans on CBRN-related research works: firstly, SSPC is engaged in building a strong database in order to regularly monitor CBRN events. To mark the 20th anniversary of OPCW in April 2017, we published an issue brief on the journey of CWC and OPCW during the last two decades. Another timely publication titled "Nerve Agent: Potent Chemical Weapon for War, Terrorism and Assassinations" has been published primarily to highlight the two distinct chemical weapon events this year involving the use of the lethal nerve agents in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and in Khan Sheikhoun town in Syria. How these incidents have virtually questioned the effectiveness of the international regimes and underscored the urgency for a robust collective effort to bring the possessors or users of this insidious weapon agent to justice and complete destruction of remaining

stockpiles. We have also as part of our CBW monitoring endeavours, chronicled Deash's (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) 's tryst with chemical weapons in Syria and Iraq. This Jihadist group's indiscriminate use of chemical weapons or agents against civilian and military targets in the last few years violates every international and humanitarian laws. It has not only used the weapons in its violent campaigns, but has attempted to build full-fledged chemical arsenal within its controlled territories which makes it virtually the first non-state or in other words designated terrorist group, pursue a chemical weapon program for military purposes.

Even after the territorial reversal of the ISIS in Middle East, the international agencies have no idea if the ISIS has dumped or concealed its chemical arsenals or transferred any CW materials from its earlier strongholds to any other power centres such as Afghanistan and Pakistan (so called IS Khurasan).

Mr Chairman,

The imminent dangers posed by chemical weapons emanating not only from Non State Actors, but also from Nation States are virtually posing new challenges before the international community and before the OPCW. The lack of consensus among major world powers regarding international inspections of chemical weapons use in Syria and beyond would definitely embolden both possessor and perpetrators of Chemical crimes against humanity in future. It is a duty as well as moral and legal responsibility of all state parties to make sure and guarantee that chemicals are used only for peaceful purposes, not for military reasons ever.

Mr Chairman,

On behalf of my organisation, I would like to congratulate the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (Algeria) and the International Master Courses in Protection Against CBRNe Events, at University of Rome Tor Vergata (Italy), for winning the coveted OPCW-The Hague Award 2017.

On behalf of SSPC, I am very much looking forward to the meetings, side events, and discussions scheduled for this week.

Thank you, Mr Chairman, and I wish for this statement to be made part of the final CSP record and posted on the external server and website.