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BANGLADESH

**STATEMENT BY MR KAZI RUSSEL PERVEZ
CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES OF THE EMBASSY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH AND ALTERNATE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF
THE STATES PARTIES**

Chairperson of the Conference of the States Parties, Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki,
Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü,
Deputy Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Hamid Ali Rao,
Members of international organisations, specialised agencies, and scientific community,
Members of civil society and ngos,
Distinguished delegates,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the very outset, I would like to extend to Your Excellency Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki our felicitations and warm welcome as the Chairperson of the Twenty-Second Session of the Conference of the States Parties. We express our confidence in you and hope that under your able leadership the conduct of business of this session will come to a successful conclusion. I would also like to congratulate the newly elected members of the Bureau and other officials. We pledge our full support and cooperation to you and the members of your Bureau in the discharge of your mandate.

We would also like to register our deepest appreciation to the Chairperson of the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties, Ambassador Dr Christoph Israng of Germany for all his dedicated efforts during the last session of the Conference.

We wish to thank the Director-General for his informative and comprehensive report presented at this session. We would like to commend Director-General and his team in the Technical Secretariat for their hard work and dedicated efforts in the implementation of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The delegation of Bangladesh is honoured to pay tribute to Your Excellency Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for your invaluable contribution over the last eight years for the cause of humanity and for our shared goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

We express our sincere appreciation to the Chairperson of the Executive Council Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal for steering the process of the appointment of the next Director-General of the OPCW robustly, fairly, openly and transparently. We take the opportunity to extend our warm felicitations and good wishes to His Excellency Ambassador



Fernando Arias of Spain on his unanimous recommendation by the Executive Council for the position of the Director-General of the OPCW.

The delegation of Bangladesh takes the privilege to congratulate the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism from Algeria and the International Master Courses in Protection Against CBRNe Events at the University of Rome Tor Vergata for their being the joint recipients of the prestigious 2017 OPCW-The Hague Award in recognition of their contribution towards the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Bangladesh's delegation aligns itself with the statement made at this session by the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Her Excellency Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah, on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

This year of 2017 is certainly a special year for the OPCW as it celebrates the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. As an original signatory to the Convention, Bangladesh proudly joins the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the OPCW. The enviable success of the Chemical Weapons Convention over the last twenty years is certainly the result of the collaborative efforts and commitment of the States Parties, chemical industry, scientific community, and civil society coupled with the competence of the Technical Secretariat.

In this spirit, Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina issued a message in April this year on this auspicious occasion of the twentieth anniversary. In her message, the Hon'ble Prime Minister expressed Bangladesh's firm commitment to the aspirations of the OPCW in making the world safer by eliminating the threat of chemical weapons both by destroying the stockpile and preventing re-emergence of such weapon in any form, and reiterated utmost support of Bangladesh for the Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW towards achieving our common goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, Bangladesh believes it should be our collective endeavour to spread the message of our shared goal of a world free of chemical weapons. In this regard, I am happy to inform you that jointly with the OPCW, Bangladesh National Authority hosted an "International Seminar on Advanced Chemical Safety and Security Management" in Dhaka on 18 and 19 October 2017. His Excellency Mr Hamid Ali Rao, Deputy Director-General of the OPCW joined the opening ceremony of the seminar as a Special Guest. Bangladesh National Authority also hosted a "National Symposium on Chemical Weapons Convention for the Peaceful Use of Chemistry" in Dhaka on 17 October this year along with other befitting programmes in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We would like to reiterate our long-standing principled position towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament including the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction and reaffirm that the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as a weapon anywhere by anyone and under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the provisions of the Convention and all norms of international law.

We express our deep concerns on the reports of use and alleged use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and elsewhere, and at the same time, we express our delight for the

Russian Federation's completing the destruction of its declared chemical weapons stockpile. Bangladesh is convinced that that the Russian Federation has set an example before the world expressing its commitment towards a world free of chemical weapons and shall equally continue their good work in safeguarding the Convention globally.

While we note progress in disposing of the declared chemical weapons stockpile in the Syrian Arab Republic, we would strongly encourage further consultations between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Technical Secretariat to resolve all outstanding issues in a spirit of confidence and cooperation.

The delegation of Bangladesh wishes to thank the Director-General for bringing the seventh report of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to the attention of the States Parties on 2 November 2017. We also wish to thank the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM) for its report of 2 November 2017 regarding an alleged incident in Ltamenah, the Syrian Arab Republic on 30 March 2017.

We are once again saddened by the findings of the seventh report of the JIM on the release of sarin at Khan Shaykhun on 4 April 2017 by the Syrian Arab Republic and the use of sulfur mustard at Um-Housh on 15 and 16 September 2016 by Da'esh. We are also perturbed by the report of the FFM, which concludes that sarin was more than likely used as a chemical weapon on 30 March 2017 in the south of Ltamenah. We once again denounce the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as a weapon in the Syrian Arab Republic as a violation of international humanitarian law. As a Party to the Convention, Bangladesh strongly condemns the repeated use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as a weapon in the Syrian Arab Republic and reaffirms that those responsible must be held accountable. We therefore, urge all to uphold the Convention under any circumstances.

Bangladesh appreciates the successes of the OPCW towards complete destruction of the stockpiles of chemical weapons. We hope that this Organisation would work with a renewed spirit of cooperation and consensus to eliminate the possibility of any further use of chemical weapons anywhere by anyone under any circumstances.

Bangladesh continues to fulfil its obligations under Article VII of the Convention relating to national implementation measures. We deeply appreciate the encouragement and active support of the Technical Secretariat to this end. Bangladesh believes that the States Parties lacking capacity and capability would get appropriate assistance and technical support for enabling them for the full implementation of the Convention.

Bangladesh is convinced that the adoption of an action plan for the full and effective implementation of Article XI is paramount. We welcome the States Parties' commitment to promote peaceful uses of chemistry under Article XI. Bangladesh welcomes the efforts made by the Technical Secretariat to enhance the implementation of Article XI and urges all for a systematic approach to the full and effective implementation of this Article taking into due consideration the needs of developing States Parties.

The OPCW has achieved tremendous successes by dint of the unwavering support of the States Parties. Bangladesh recognises the importance of future priorities of the OPCW, and in this regard commends the work done so far by the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities, guided by the Co-Chairs, Ambassador Sabine Nölke of Canada and Ambassador Bruce Koloane of South Africa. We would like to encourage continued discussion to formulate a document in this regard for its adoption at the Fourth Review Conference next

year. We commit our wholehearted support towards making the Fourth Review Conference a great success for the benefit of shaping an organisation, which is able and willing, to make this world truly free from chemical weapons.

Bangladesh also likes to commend the continued works of the Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism, Ambassador Momar Diop of Senegal, and Chairperson of the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors, Ambassador María Teresa Infante of Chile. We would like to encourage further dialogue and discussion on these pertinent issues.

We would like to emphasise again that it is imperative to ensure an equitable geographical and balanced gender representation, particularly at the professional level in the Technical Secretariat. We believe that the proposed JPO programme would be an important step towards equitable geographical representation. As a capacity-building measure, we hope that the Technical Secretariat will find innovative means like dedicated funding arrangement to cater to the applicants from the developing States Parties for the JPO programme.

Before I conclude, let us remind ourselves of the painful fact that the Convention is faced with challenges. Until and unless, we the States Parties could address these challenges by working together, our shared goal of a world of chemical weapons would be far from reality. Bangladesh is committed to do it as it is our firm conviction that the chemical weapons simply have no place in this century.

I ask that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session of the Conference of the States Parties.

I thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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