



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-Second Session
27 November – 1 December 2017

C-22/NAT.29
29 November 2017
ENGLISH only

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

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AT THE TWENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF
THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, Mr Ambassador, I wish to congratulate you on your election as Chairperson of the Conference of the States Parties to the OPCW. I am confident that under your able leadership, we will succeed in achieving our objectives. I wish also to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support.

Allow me also to thank the Director-General, Ambassador Üzümcü, for his comprehensive statement. My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement delivered by Ambassador Madah of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

The Islamic Republic of Iran wishes also to welcome the consensus on His Excellency Mr Fernando Arias of Spain to be appointed by the Conference to serve as the new Director-General of the OPCW. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to extend its appreciation to the Director-General, H.E. Mr Üzümcü, for the excellent job he has done and his contributions to the fulfilment of the OPCW's goals and wishes Ambassador Arias all the best and inform him of our readiness to lend full support to him towards achieving the aim of having a world free of chemical weapons.

We praise all the accomplishments so far made in advancing the international implementation of the provisions of the Convention. However, in view of the current facts and developments, can we assume that the threat of chemical weapons has been eradicated? There is no doubt that the remaining chemical arsenals, belonging to both States Parties or non-parties, can endanger global peace and security. The danger of terrorist groups, which may directly or indirectly receive support from some countries, has been a fact of life in the past several years. The ominous prospect of their getting access to chemical weapons is all the more disruptive. We strongly believe that the use of chemical weapons by terrorist groups in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq is a consequence of such a support and the international



community should put an end to this trend. As long as the universality of this Convention is yet to be realised the threat of the use of this inhumane weapon by terrorist groups will continue and the goals and objectives of this instrument remain unfulfilled. To achieve these goals the Member States and the Technical Secretariat must utilise and optimise all their efforts and insist that all non-parties, especially the Israeli regime that is not member of any convention on weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) while possessing WMDs, accede to and implement the provisions of the relevant international regimes.

It is noteworthy that the conclusion of this Convention was inspired by the shocking memories of the use of different types of chemical weapons by the former Iraqi regime against the Islamic Republic of Iran in the 1980s. As result of these inhumane attacks, thousands of civilians and military personnel lost their life or were severely injured by chemical weapons. Thus, the Islamic Republic of Iran as a main victim of chemical weapons has always been supportive and obliged to the full and effective implementation of all provisions of the Convention. We have had close cooperation with the Technical Secretariat in organising several events every year, for instance, last June concurrent with the 20th anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention and commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the victims of chemical attack against the city of Sardasht, in northwest of the Islamic Republic of Iran, we held a regional course on protection and assistance with the presence of the Director-General in the final ceremony. The Islamic Republic of Iran is planning to conduct the 10th international medical course on treatment of victims of chemical weapons for next year in Tehran. These meetings and courses also serve as an efficient tool for the Convention's outreach.

Realising the goals of the Convention require the political will by all States Parties and allocation of enough resources by all stakeholders in particular the Technical Secretariat. What has so far been done is yet to be satisfying. For instance, Article XI of the Convention is receiving less attention by some States Parties compared to some other Articles and is yet to be fulfilled based on a balanced approach. This question remains unanswered why two decades after the conclusion of the Convention the OPCW has failed to adopt an action plan for the implementation of Article XI. After 20 years of the implementation of the Convention, one can argue that not only expectations of developing States Parties have not been met, but misinterpretations of this Article have diluted the real commitment to its complete operation. Similarly, another goal of the Convention, namely Article X and the Voluntary Network to support the Victims of Chemical Weapons is as well overshadowed by the politicised approach of some States Parties.

The completion of destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles constitutes the main obligation under the Convention. My delegation welcomes completion of operations at the Kizner chemical weapons destruction facility, which marks the completion of the full destruction of the declared chemical weapons by the Russian Federation, and urges the other major possessor State to take every necessary step to expedite its chemical arsenal destruction processes and fulfil its obligations under the Convention as soon as possible. Destruction of chemical stockpiles by the Russian Federation before the revised deadline proves that if there is a will, there is a way. In the same vein, my delegation commends the completion of destruction of chemical weapons of Libya. We urge the Technical Secretariat to engage with the remaining possessor States to accelerate destruction of their remaining chemical stockpiles.

The successful efforts of the Syrian Arab Republic in fulfilling its obligations – in a belligerent and unsecured situation – to destroy its chemical weapons is praiseworthy. Based on its peaceful foreign policy, the Islamic Republic of Iran helped and encouraged the Syrian Arab Republic to accede to the Convention and in order to assist this country to implement its obligations, the National Authority of the Islamic Republic of Iran offered to and shared its experiences with its Syrian counterpart. However, we are witnessing that the Syrian Arab Republic who has been a victim of terrorism and has been targeted with chemical weapons by Daesh and other terrorist groups, is under serious pressure of some countries that pursue their short-sighted political goals and, in one instance, was targeted by missile attacks, which constituted an unlawful aggression. We categorically condemn such an action which followed unfounded and unsubstantiated allegations. In fact, to avoid such actions, we should try to advance within the OPCW a discourse based on dialogue, moderation and peace and do away with imposition, unilateralism and intimidation.

There is another newly emerged precedent that needs proper attention. In fact, consensual decision making had been a long-lasting valuable practice within the OPCW, but my delegation notes with regret that the politically motivated agenda, pushed by a few States Parties, has endangered this precious practice.

It is more than a year that the OEWG for Future Priorities has started constantly to discuss the future format and mandate of our Organisation. Due to the reasons outlined earlier, we emphasise that any initiative in this regard should be totally transparent, consistent with the framework of the Convention and keep disarmament as the main priority of the OPCW.

In closing, my country hails the OPCW's efforts towards realising the main pillars of the Convention. However, we should be realistic in our evaluation, especially ahead of the Fourth Review Conference which is going to be held at the end of 2018. As the international community is facing the threat of the use of chemical weapons, there are a lot of activities that we have to carry out. As long as the remaining chemical stockpiles are not destroyed, the universality of the Convention is not realised and the danger of terrorist groups having access to these inhumane weapons, and using them persists, there is no place for complacency and we must remain concerned about the security of our nations and continued peace for coming generations.

I wish to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session and posted both on the OPCW's external and public website.

Thank you.

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