



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Third Review Conference
8 – 19 April 2013

RC-3/NAT.61
8 April 2013
ENGLISH only

INDIA

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR BHASWATI MUKHERJEE
CHAIRPERSON OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL TO THE THIRD REVIEW
CONFERENCE (AGENDA ITEM SEVEN: REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ON THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE THIRD REVIEW
CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES)**

Mr Chairperson, distinguished delegates,

1. It is an honour and privilege to report to the Third Review Conference on the work of the Executive Council in preparation for the Conference. Let me in the first instance extend my warmest congratulations to you on your election as well as to the Vice Chairpersons and to the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, the Honourable Ambassador of Iraq.
2. During the period under review, the Executive Council as an important policy-making organ worked in the spirit of consensus and mutual understanding in order to address many challenges, including an excellent and pragmatic decision forwarded to the Conference of the States Parties at its Sixteenth Session on the final extended deadline.
3. The Council met for 19 sessions and convened five meetings during the intersessional period. Except for the year 2008, when the Council met three times, it held four sessions annually. During this period, the Council took 101 decisions.
4. In addition to its formal sittings, the Council also actively carried out its oversight task. Its Vice-Chairs are to be felicitated for their contribution and for actively facilitating the work of the issues under their respective clusters. Similarly, the regional coordinators and facilitators made a valuable contribution throughout the reporting period on several outstanding issues, enabling some to be removed from the agenda of the Executive Council. I also wish to pay personal tribute to the consistent support and technical advice discreetly given whenever the occasion demanded by our Director-General and members of his dedicated staff. Their tireless efforts enabled the Council to conduct its work so effectively and in a timely manner.
5. Allow me to briefly refer to the efforts of the Executive Council to improve its work methodology from its Sixty-Second Session onwards. In 2010 and 2011, a comprehensive review of the outstanding issues on the agenda of the Council was carried out. As a result, the issues on the agenda of the Council were classified into two categories: “Issues under regular consideration by the Council” and “Outstanding issues”. At the request by the Council at its Sixty-Seventh Session, informal consultations on issues related to improving the methodology of the Council’s work were initiated in 2012. At the Seventieth and Seventy-First Sessions of the Council, I



- made a detailed presentation on my informal consultations related to the improvement of the methodology of the work of the Council including those recommendations on which consensus had been reached and on those on which there had been partial or full implementation as well as those on which there was no consensus or where consensus appeared to be difficult because of opposing viewpoints. The Council agreed with the Chairperson's assessment that the consultations should continue intersessionally on issues related to the improvement of the methodology of the work of the Council.
6. Let me now turn to the work of the Council relevant to the preparations for the Third Review Conference. At its Sixteenth Session, the Conference of the States Parties decided to hold the Third Review Conference from 8 to 19 April 2013 (paragraph 21.2 of C-16/5, dated 2 December 2011). At the same Session, the Conference recommended that the Council establish an open-ended working group to begin preparations, in cooperation with the Secretariat, for the Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which will be convened in accordance with paragraph 22 of Article VIII of the Convention (paragraph 21.1, C-16/5).
 7. At its Sixty-Eighth Session, the Council decided to establish the Bureau of the open-ended working group and agreed on the following nominations for the Bureau: H.E. Mrs. Nassima Baghli of Algeria (African Group) as Chairperson, and of H.E. Mrs Mary Whelan of Ireland (WEOG), H.E. Mr Kazem Gharib Abadi of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Asia Group), H.E. Mr Roman Kolodkin of the Russian Federation (Eastern European Group) and H. E. Mr Álvaro Moerzinger of Uruguay (GRULAC) as Vice-Chairpersons of the open-ended working group.
 8. The Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group, Ambassador Baghli, will report on the results of the Group's work to the Conference at a later stage. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Baghli, her Bureau and her technical team for their outstanding contribution to the preparation for this Third Review Conference.
 9. Allow me to bring to the attention of the Conference the proceedings of the Thirty-Second Meeting of the Executive Council held on 27 March 2013 on "Information to be provided by the Director-General on the request of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the OPCW to support an investigation of alleged use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic." The Council received information from the Director-General on this issue. A statement by the Chairperson of the Executive Council was read out based on elements and inputs from different members of the Council. Among its highlights was the expression of deep concern by the Council that chemical weapons may have been used in the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the Council underlining that the use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances would be reprehensible and completely contrary to the legal norms and standards of the international community. The Council also expressed its "unequivocal support of the investigation that has been initiated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations with the support of the OPCW. The Council called upon all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic to extend their full cooperation to the investigation and to ensure that the investigation team is able to complete the investigation safely and effectively."
 10. Thank you very much for your attention and I wish the Review Conference under your Chairmanship an outstanding success.