



OPCW

Executive Council

Sixty-Seventh Session
14 – 17 February 2012

EC-67/NAT.22
14 February 2012
ARABIC and ENGLISH only

IRAQ

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DR SA'AD ABDELMAJID AL ALI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE OPCW
AT THE SIXTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson
H.E. the Director-General,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me on behalf of the delegation of my country and on my own behalf to welcome you, Mr Chairperson, as you preside over the work of the Council at its first session of the year 2012, and to welcome H.E. the Director-General of the Organisation (OPCW), his Deputy and the distinguished attendees. I hope that this year will witness further progress in our fruitful cooperation with the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation and its State Parties in order to achieve the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention (Convention). I am fully confident that this session will produce constructive discussions and successful decisions under your able leadership and profound experience and patience; I would admit here that I have learned much from you Mr Chairperson. I also want to assure you of the full support of my delegation to a successful conclusion of this session and to all the activities followed up by His Excellency the Director-General of the OPCW, to ensure a smooth flow of the Technical Secretariat work in order to achieve the goals for which the Convention was founded in order to promote international peace and security.

Furthermore, I welcome Mr Konstantin Gavrilov, in his position as Director of the Secretariat for the Policy-Making Organs (PMO), and Mr Jun Wang, in his position as Director, External Relations. I wish them all success.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to reaffirm the support of my delegation to the statement of Her Excellency the Ambassador of Cuba, Ms Zelmays Maria Domínguez Cortina, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

I'll focus in this statement on the progress made at the national level in the disposal of the remnants of chemical weapons which have been declared to the Secretariat of the OPCW in April 2009, to complete the review and information provided by the Iraqi National Monitoring Directorate (INMD) during the informal session of the Council on Monday, 13 February 2012.



In the informal session the esteemed Council has been briefed over the executive aspect manifested in the practical steps undertaken by the national authorities in order to liquidate the decommissioned Al Muthanna storage bunkers (41 and 13), under the supervision and support of His Excellency the Minister of Science and Technology in order to expedite the preparation of a destruction plan for the storage bunkers. The most important aspects of the plan are building of the infrastructure, housing complexes for the workers, and work sites, as well as security precautions and technical reports in preparation for the start of the project, of which about 80% was completed in a short period not exceeding three months, although the area in which the mentioned storages do exist had been destroyed during military operations in the Second Gulf War (1991), and also was exposed to destruction operations carried out by the committees of the United Nations in the period 1992 to 1994, and the subsequent events after 2003.

With regard to the continuation of the technical deliberations with the Secretariat and the States Parties interested in helping Iraq in order to reach a safe and secure way of disposing of the remnants in these storage bunkers, I would like to point out that these deliberations have reached the technical approach that have been presented to you, which can be summarised as follows:

- Opening of storage bunker 41
- The encapsulation of storage bunker 13 with self-consolidation concrete.

In this context, it is necessary to clarify the technical and legal basis on which the proposed method is based for the destruction of chemical remnants declared to the Secretariat of the Organisation in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and the Verification Annex, which can be summarised as follows:

1 - The destruction process will be irreversible by which the remnants are converted in an essentially irreversible way, as provided by paragraph 12, Part IV (A) of the Verification Annex, "Destruction of Chemical Weapons and Its Verification Pursuant to Article IV of the Convention" under subpart C. - Destruction "Principles and methods for destruction of chemical weapons" (a process by which chemicals are converted in an essentially irreversible way to a form unsuitable for production of chemical weapons, and which in an irreversible manner renders munitions and other devices unusable as such).

2 - The destruction process is subject to verification under the provisions of the Convention, and till the last stage of the destruction, which is provided by paragraph 14 of Part IV (A) of the Verification Annex, subpart C. - Destruction (Each State Party shall construct and operate facilities for the destruction of chemical weapons in a manner to ensure the destruction of chemical weapons, so that it is possible to verify the destruction process under the provisions of this Agreement).

3 - The destruction process gives top priority to the safety of the people and protection of the environment, according to paragraph 10 of Article IV of the Convention (Each State Party, during transportation, sampling, storage and destruction of chemical weapons, shall assign the highest priority to ensuring the safety of people and to protecting the environment. Each State Party shall transport, sample, store and destroy chemical weapons in accordance with its national standards for safety and emissions).

4 - The non-violation of the proposed method to any provision of the Convention and the competence of the Executive Council to determine the order of destruction, as stated in paragraph 8 of Article IV (If a State ratifies or accedes to this Convention after the 10-year period for destruction set forth in paragraph 6, it shall destroy chemical weapons specified in paragraph 1 as soon as possible. The order of destruction and procedures for stringent verification for such a State Party shall be determined by the Executive Council), and paragraph 13 of Part IV (A) of the Verification Annex, C. - Destruction (Each State Party shall determine how it shall destroy chemical weapons, except that the following processes may not be used: dumping in any body of water, land burial or open pit burning. It shall destroy chemical weapons only at specifically designated and appropriately designed and equipped facilities).

The proposed method presented to the Council is the outcome of technical meetings and discussions that lasted for more than two years and up to now between the Iraqi national authorities and experts from the Secretariat of the Organisation and experts from State Parties interested in helping Iraq, particularly Germany, the United States and the United Kingdom. We would like to avail ourselves of this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to the position of these countries, as well as the Secretariat for their support to Iraq and call on other State Parties to contribute by providing assistance to disposal of these remnants safely and securely.

We would like to stress that the delegation of Iraq welcomes any suggestions or opinions that would speed up the disposal of these remnants in a manner that ensures the safety of people and the protection of the environment.

As we reaffirm the commitment and willingness of the Government of my country to implement its obligations under the Convention, we hope to submit an initial plan of destruction to the Secretariat of the Organisation and the Council before the end of this year, emphasising that the amount of progress will certainly depend on the support of States Parties particularly with regard to the provision of services, equipment and training.

In conclusion, I would like to refer to EC-67/NAT.10, dated 13 February 2012 (information paper), and EC-67/NAT.10/Corr.1, dated 15 February 2012, that have been distributed before you. They include the destruction plan approach for the Al Muthanna bunkers. I, reaffirm the commitment and keenness of my Government to cooperate with the Secretariat and with all States Parties to the Convention, in order to achieve the goals and the objectives for which this Organisation was founded, to have a world free of chemical weapons, in which all nations would enjoy security and stability.

I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Sixty-Seventh Session of the Executive Council.

Thanks.

- - - 0 - - -