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IRAQ

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

Madam Chairperson,
Excellency the Director-General of the Organisation,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me on behalf of this delegation to welcome you, Madam Chairperson, as you preside over the work of the Council for the first time. We are confident that thanks to your experience and your technical and diplomatic skills, you will make a significant contribution to fruitful and constructive discussions. I assure you of the Iraqi delegation's support during the deliberations of this session in your efforts to reach positive decisions, and I welcome H.E. Ahmet Üzümcü, the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, his deputy, and all present. I should not fail to thank H.E. Ambassador Peter Goosen for his great efforts in chairing the Executive Council sessions during the previous period, and I wish that this session will witness further progress in our fruitful cooperation with the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation and its Member States. I wish to assure you of my delegation's support to ensure the success of the deliberations of this session and of all the activities followed up by H.E. the Director-General in his efforts to ensure a smooth performance of the Technical Secretariat's work with a view to achieving the objectives of the Convention and to promoting international peace and security.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by H.E. Ms Zelmays María Domínguez Cortina, Ambassador of Cuba, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China. We congratulate the delegation of our neighbouring country, the Islamic Republic of Iran, on chairing the Non-Aligned Movement group during the coming sessions.

With regard to the progress made at the national level, I wish to highlight briefly some of the activities, as follows:

(a) As part of the requirements of the national legislation under Article VII of the Convention, a copy of the "Law of the National Monitoring Directorate on the Prohibition of Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Weapons of Mass Destruction and dual-use equipment associated with such Weapons" has been submitted to the International Cooperation and Assistance Division of the Technical Secretariat.

(b) Our National Authority has submitted to the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW a national paper (EC-69/NAT.3) requesting the conversion of Al Rashad facility for purposes



not prohibited under the Convention. This request will be discussed during the present session of the Council under agenda item "Conversion of former chemical weapons production facilities". I avail myself of this opportunity to thank the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW for its fruitful cooperation with our national authorities in this regard. I emphasise here that our delegation welcomes any comments or requests for clarification that the Member States may wish to make or raise bilaterally with our National Authority.

(c) The setting up, within the Ministry of Science and Technology, of a new General Department for the treatment and destruction of chemical and biological remnants and other hazardous war agents. The Department shall be tasked with the treatment and destruction of war remnants such as military weapons, landmines, munitions, equipment and other special weapons. This is a step in the right direction towards the establishment of an official body in Iraq dedicated to undertaking this vital and important activity.

(d) The achievement of high completion rates in the construction of the infrastructure and the implementation of logistics requirements at the site of bunkers 13 and 41, such as the manufacture of devices for the project and the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment, in addition to the ongoing work for the development of a type of cement to be used for the encapsulation of remnants in bunker 13. A report on the research conducted in this regard has been sent to the National Authorities of a number of Member States for their information and feedback in order to ensure the best results.

(e) Continued communication with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW and with Member States that have expressed an interest in providing Iraq with assistance in the destruction of its chemical remnants. Indeed, work is under way to conclude a memorandum of understanding between Iraq and the United Kingdom on the training of personnel from our National Authority. A second memorandum of understanding is also to be concluded between Iraq and the Federal Republic of Germany concerning the provision of equipment and training for the identification of gases inside the aforementioned bunkers. I shall not fail to mention the continued cooperation with the United States of America in the field of training and expert advice to the personnel of our National Authority, as well as the cooperation with Switzerland, the Russia Federation, India, and Poland. We thank all these countries for their efforts, interest and serious desire to cooperate with Iraq, and we affirm that the amount of progress in the preparation of the destruction plan will certainly depend on the help and support by Member States, especially with regard to the provision of equipment and training courses.

I wish to refer to the efforts being made to identify the future priorities of the Organisation in order to reach positive results on this matter. We wish to reaffirm our view that priority must be accorded to achieving the goals for which the OPCW was founded.

In the context of the ongoing preparatory meetings, I wish, on behalf of my delegation, to express our thanks and support to Ms Nasima Baghli, Ambassador of Algeria, for her valuable efforts in steering the meetings and discussions of the Open-Ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Third Review Conference.

I wish to request that this statement be circulated as one of the official documents of this session.

Thank you.