



OPCW

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INDIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR BHASWATI MUKHERJEE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA TO THE OPCW
AT THE SEVENTIETH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Distinguished colleagues,
Dear friends,

1. The Seventieth Session of the Executive Council is taking place at a time when the OPCW is passing through a crucial period of transition. At a time of flux and new and potential challenges to international peace and security, the OPCW as the only multilateral disarmament organisation has a vital role to play to implement the first paragraph of its preamble, i.e., “effective progress towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction”. This session therefore offers an invaluable opportunity for the Council to address and seek solutions to these issues. The dilemma facing the Council and the Organisation is therefore to ensure the timely destruction of the remaining chemical weapons stockpiles while making preparations for the transition period.

2. It is paramount for the Council to recognise the importance of the time-bound destruction of all chemical weapons stockpiles. At the last session, and after an extensive and transparent negotiation process, the Council adopted agreed language in its report on the progress made on the completion of destruction of chemical weapons as well as on appropriate measures in order to meet the planned completion date, which would be an important template for this session.

3. During the intersessional period, several important developments have taken place, including a very productive meeting of the Host Country Committee that took place on 18 July. I have briefed the Council regarding the very positive developments relating to our joint efforts to improve the working methods of the Council, emanating from the last informal consultations on 29 August 2012. The Bureau has also been very active.

4. We are fortunate in being guided by a Director-General of the calibre and efficiency of Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü during this period of transition. His flexibility in presenting a revised budget is commendable. His efforts to focus attention on the importance of the Convention and the work of OPCW mark an important stage in our joint efforts to sensitise the international community and the public regarding the importance of this Organisation. India supports his initiative in organising a high-level meeting in New York on 1 October 2012 with the support of the UN Secretary-General to speak on 15 years of the Convention.



India's Foreign Minister Mr S.M. Krishna will be participating and speaking at this Conference.

5. Our Vice-Chairs have made outstanding contributions during the intersessional period. The Ambassador of Sudan led the consultations on administration and financial issues and the US Ambassador on the industry cluster. Other Vice-Chairs have also provided leadership. Our different facilitators have also been very productive and we will be hearing from them under the appropriate agenda items. Let me congratulate our new facilitator from the United Kingdom for taking over the Article X facilitation. Let me also welcome the new Members of the Council, the Ambassadors of Mexico, Germany, and Pakistan respectively.

6. India fully associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Iran on behalf of the NAM States Parties and China.

7. India attaches the highest importance to the preparatory process leading up to the Third Review Conference. We look forward to being briefed by the Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group, the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria, under the relevant agenda item. 11 meetings of the working group have already been held. The next is scheduled for this Thursday. India stands ready to contribute to a successful outcome of these negotiations leading up to the circulation of a draft document by the Secretariat.

8. Let me turn now to the Draft Programme and Budget for 2013. It appears to be a good template that reflects future challenges facing States Parties. The Draft Budget makes a commendable effort to balance available resources as required in the current economic environment. India supports the Director-General's pragmatic and flexible approach and takes note of the assurances provided by the Technical Secretariat that there will be no impact in real terms on funding for international cooperation. This is of fundamental importance in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention.

9. India has repeatedly reiterated its conviction that only when an effective system for full implementation of the Convention through effective legislation is established, can States Parties be assured of an effective system of national implementation to meet their industry verification obligations. Today the weakest link in the security chain poses the greatest danger in this globalised world. We should give importance to the strengthening of national implementation. Only 47% of States Parties have had legislation in all key areas in the last 15 years.

10. Let me pause to inform the Council regarding India's efforts to fully implement its obligations under Article VI. India has evolved an effective mechanism of "help desks" in different regions of the country. Any Indian chemical industry having problems related to CWC declarations and export/import of Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 chemicals can approach these help desks for assistance. This is a unique model. We would gladly share these experiences with interested States Parties.

11. Allow me also to inform the Council regarding efforts by our National Authority to strengthen the institutional framework for national implementation by establishing the National Scientific Advisory Board and a National Advisory Body on Administrative and Financial Matters with terms of reference similar to its counterpart in the OPCW. We would gladly share our experiences upon request with the Secretariat and interested States Parties.

12. Finally, we are happy to share with you that the Vertox laboratory of Defence Research & Development Establishment (DRDE) in Gwalior has been assigned the responsibility of sample preparation for the 32nd proficiency test being organised by the OPCW from 12 October 2012.

13. It is imperative that the Council works in the spirit of compromise and consensus to strengthen this Organisation and to uphold the ideals enshrined in the Convention. In 1947, immediately after India became a free and independent country, our first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said, and I quote:

“Peace has been said to be indivisible;
So is freedom, so is prosperity, and so also is disaster in this One World that can no longer be split into isolated fragments.”

These are indeed prophetic words. We need to work together so that the multilateral systems that we have built so carefully do not falter and fail.

14. I would request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Conference.

Thank you.

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