



**Statement by
Ambassador R.N. Prasad**
Permanent Representative of India to the OPCW and
Leader of the Indian Delegation to the
Seventy-Seventh Session of the Executive Council
7-10 October 2014

Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

First of all, I should like to thank the Director General for his comprehensive and useful statement. I should also like to take this opportunity to commend the Director General, the Technical Secretariat and other stake-holders for all the good work that has been done since the last Executive Council Session. In particular, I should like to mention the success that has been achieved in the context of destruction of Syria's chemical weapons.

My delegation endorses and associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of NAM and China.

Mr. Chairman,

India views the Chemical Weapons Convention as a unique, non-discriminatory disarmament instrument which serves as a model for elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. In a short span of seventeen years, CWC has been remarkably successful in attaining near universality. Today, almost hundred years since the first use of chemical weapons on 22 April 1915 during World War I, we stand at an important juncture in our journey towards a world free of chemical weapons. A number of innovations have taken place since in chemistry and chemical technologies. The Convention's potential for fostering chemistry exclusively for peaceful purposes is huge and now is a time for introspection for us to see if the new techniques and innovations are being used for the general well-being of mankind.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like to express satisfaction at the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons and stockpiles, with a very small quantity now remaining. The destruction of 12 CWPFs in Syria remains an unfinished task and a priority for all of us. In this regard, India welcomes the tripartite agreement signed recently.

Mr. Chairman,

We have taken note of the second report of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM). India has strong concerns regarding use of chemical weapons by anybody under any circumstances. As mentioned in our Statement in the last EC Meeting, we hope very much that further investigations would be conducted by the FFM and the perpetrators of such abhorrent acts held accountable. It goes without saying, Mr. Chairman, that the Fact Finding Mission should incorporate all relevant inputs received by it in its reports.

Mr. Chairman,

As an original signatory to the Convention, India attaches importance to its success and its full and effective implementation. India also supports its universality. India's consistent position has been that the use of chemical weapons anywhere and by anybody cannot be justified. All chemical weapons must be destroyed. Destruction of chemical weapons is the most important undertaking made by every State Party to the Convention. Delays and postponement of deadlines are best avoided. We urge all possessor States to take necessary steps to expedite their destruction processes. We urge the Technical Secretariat to formulate an Action Plan with monitorable and verifiable targets.

Mr. Chairman,

India strongly supports the setting up of National Authorities by States Parties. Such efforts greatly strengthen our organization as we move towards our common objective of achieving universal adherence to the Convention. The importance of National Implementation cannot be overemphasized. It is a welcome sign that issues regarding Article VII of the Convention are gaining in importance during discussions in regional meetings and global meetings of National Authorities. Recently, India held The Twelfth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties of the Asian Region in New Delhi in July 2014. This was a productive meeting. India remains committed to supporting regional initiatives for better and more effective implementation of the Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

We are happy to note that the Technical Secretariat is taking active interest in implementation of Article X. It is gratifying that more than 50 training courses have been conducted so far involving more than one thousand participants. We are also happy to note that the data bank on protection, established by the Technical Secretariat as required under paragraph 5 of Article X of the Convention is being continuously updated. India recently collaborated with the OPCW in organizing the "Regional Basic Course in Assistance and Protection Against Chemical Weapons" in New Delhi from 25 to 29 August 2014.

Together with the goal of eliminating chemical weapons, the CWC also makes economic and technological development through international cooperation in the field of peaceful chemical activities as one of the four core objectives of the Convention. The inter-sessional period witnessed deliberations on issues related to international

cooperation and assistance, including a workshop on Article XI. We continue to believe that development of a well-defined Action Plan with monitorable indicators is essential for the full implementation of Article XI. As this is one of the important pillars of the Convention, we also believe that there should be steady increase in budgetary allocations from the regular programme and budget for its implementation.

An important agenda before us relates to the adoption of the Budget and Programme of the Organisation for the next year. One cannot over-emphasise the need for a timely decision on budget as it has a significant bearing on the activities of the Organisation. The rationale of the Medium Term Plan (MTP) commencing in April 2015 is laudable - to provide strategic direction to the Organisation in the context of a highly dynamic environment. We are happy to note that the MTP acknowledges the constancy and immutability of the vision and core objectives of the Organisation, while speaking of change. Changes have to be brought in after due consideration and open discussions. Expediency should not be allowed to take precedence over principles.

Mr. Chairman,

The Secure Information Exchange (SIX) is an initiative of the Technical Secretariat which has India's total support. As all of us are aware, EDNA has improved the quality of declarations substantially. Errors have come down significantly because of the standardisation brought about by electronic formats. But still, the declarations in compact discs reach the OPCW from States Parties through diplomatic bags. This is akin to a modern car being pulled by an oxen. In addition to electronic formats, we also need to adopt online exchange of information. The biggest advantage of online information exchange is promptitude. Pilferage or leakage are its biggest peril. It is our belief that once security of the information pathways are guaranteed through a competent third party auditor, all States Parties and the Technical Secretariat would prefer to have online information exchange not just bilaterally between States Parties and the Technical Secretariat but also between the various States Parties inter se. Establishment of a fool-proof SIX will facilitate international trade of chemicals and promote exchange of personnel and technology across national borders for purposes not contrary to the Convention. Investment of time and resources in establishing SIX is therefore to be viewed as something more than an administrative reform for economy and speed. In fact, it is an effective tool for furthering peaceful uses of chemistry as enshrined in Article XI of the Convention. Having said this, Mr. Chairman, we would appreciate it if a user manual is made available to States Parties. Another point is in relation to the leakage of information in case of usage of SIX. The Technical Secretariat Note puts the onus entirely on the State Party. Perhaps this aspect needs further examination. It is also not known whether a technical audit by a competent third party has been done. India would like to have an audit undertaken by its technical agency, the National Informatics Centre, before adopting SIX.

And lastly, Mr. Chairman, while we pursue the goal of chemical disarmament, the importance of education and awareness can hardly be overemphasized. India welcomes that 2014 has been declared as the "Year of Education and Awareness". We commend the Technical Secretariat for the event "Education for Peace: New Pathways for Securing Chemical Disarmament" held on 22-23 September 2014 at the OPCW Headquarters. Since 2004, India has been conducting the CWC Awareness

Programmes for implementation of the CWC all over the country. These Awareness Programmes have been given wide coverage. Last year, 15 such programmes were held.

I would request that this Statement be circulated as an official document of this Session of the Executive Council.

Thank you.
