



**Statement by**  
**Ambassador R.N. Prasad,**  
Permanent Representative of India to the OPCW  
at the 78th Session of the Executive Council,  
17-20 March 2015.

Mr. Chairman,  
Mr. Director General,  
Distinguished Delegates

May I, first of all, take this opportunity to compliment and congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, for the excellent work you have done and for the exemplary manner in which you have handled the many complex issues that have come to the fore during your Chairmanship.

I should also like to thank the Director General for his informative and useful statement and to commend him and the Technical Secretariat for the good work being done by them. We also welcome the Technical Secretariat's initiative in organising a commemorative event to mark the centenary of the first large scale use of chemical weapons in Ieper, Belgium.

My delegation would also like to congratulate Myanmar for the ratification by its Parliament of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We urge the remaining States that are not Parties to the Convention to consider ratifying or acceding to the Convention at the earliest.

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

Mr. Chairman,

Approximately 100 years ago, the first large scale use of chemical weapons took place during World War-I in Ieper, Belgium. The Ieper attack demonstrated how chemistry could be abused to wreak havoc. Since then, the dual use dilemma has loomed large before scientists and Governments. Now, at the cusp of the Ieper anniversary, we have reasons to believe - and believe with some satisfaction - that a world free of chemical weapons is within our reach.

Mr. Chairman,

As an original signatory to the Convention, India attaches importance to its full and effective implementation. 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 have to be avoided. We urge all possessor States to take necessary steps to expedite their destruction processes. We also urge the Technical Secretariat to formulate an Action Plan with monitorable and verifiable targets.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation has followed with interest the progress being made in the matter of destruction of Syria's Chemical Weapons Production Facilities. We hope very much that this would be completed by June 2015. We have also taken note of the recent report of the Declaration Assessment Team. It is our expectation that the Declaration Assessment team will receive full cooperation from the Syrian Arab Republic so that the goal of elimination of Syria's Chemical Weapons Programme is achieved.

Mr. Chairman,

While much success has been achieved in making the world freer of chemical weapons, there is no room for complacency. Emergence of non-state actors clouds the chemical disarmament landscape and poses a growing and real challenge. The potential of toxic chemicals falling in the hands of non-state actors remains. In such a scenario, it is our view, Mr. Chairman, that effective national implementation provides a bulwark. We urge all Member States to give priority to implementation of Article VII of the Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

The enhanced transnational movements of chemicals brings into sharp focus the issue of "transfer discrepancies". The number of unresolved transfer discrepancies is quite large. It may be useful to examine whether we can have some institutional arrangements to prevent such discrepancies from arising. Standardisation and interoperability of datasets can greatly facilitate inter-organisational cooperation between entities like the OPCW and the World Customs Organisation.

Mr. Chairman,

While it is true that the Convention is neither a Counter-Terrorism Treaty nor a Chemical Safety Treaty, we are happy that the Technical Secretariat is functioning as a facilitator and enabler for chemical safety and security. OPCW has emerged as a forum for consultation and cooperation between the States Parties which includes exchange of ideas and discussion of best practices in the area of chemical safety and security. We are happy with the encouragement and support which the OPCW gives to States Parties to facilitate such interactions, through seminars, workshops, conferences etc. Recently, an International Conference on Chemical Safety and Security was organised

in India by the Gujarat National Law University and the OPCW on 22-23 January 2015. I am happy to convey that as a sequel to this Conference, the Government of the Indian State of Gujarat has announced its decision to establish an International Institute of Chemical Safety and Research and has earmarked funds in the current year for this purpose.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the important features of the Convention is to encourage international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under this Convention, including international exchange of scientific and technical information and chemicals and equipment for production, processing or use of chemicals. What we need, Mr. Chairman, is to develop a more comprehensive Action Plan taking into consideration all the resource materials available in this regard. We urge all States Parties to work in close cooperation to develop a well-defined Action Plan with monitorable and verifiable indicators for the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI.

Mr. Chairman,

We congratulate the Technical Secretariat for successfully commissioning the Secure Information Exchange (SIX) system. The National Authority of India has registered itself as a partner in the SIX and we propose to file our future declarations through the SIX. The twin electronic tools, EDNA and SIX, have become mutually beneficial for the States Parties and the Technical Secretariat. While EDNA has made the preparatory stages of Declarations easier, SIX has made the transmission of this cost free and instantaneous. This once again underlines the fact that standardisation of data, structure and inter-operability of data contents will make our task easier and more efficient.

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the emphasis given by the Technical Secretariat to Education and Outreach. To increase public awareness about the issues related to the Convention, India has decided to observe the 5<sup>th</sup> of May every year (the date on which our National Authority was set up) as the Foundation Day of the National Authority. The Foundation Day commemoration will commence from the current year.

In the end, Mr. Chairman, I would request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session of the Executive Council.

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