



**Statement by
Ambassador J.S. Mukul,
Permanent Representative of India to the OPCW
at the 81st Session of the Executive Council,
15-18 March 2016.**

Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Director General,
Distinguished Delegates

I take this opportunity to welcome you back as Chair. We are confident that under your leadership this session will have a successful conclusion.

I would like to thank the Director General for his statement and wish to commend him and the Technical Secretariat for undertaking important and challenging tasks during the inter-sessional period.

My delegation 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,

India views the Chemical Weapons Convention as a unique, non-discriminatory disarmament instrument which serves as a model for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. In a short span, CWC has been remarkably successful in attaining near universality. We urge the remaining States that are not Parties to the Convention to consider acceding to the Convention at the earliest.

India attaches great importance to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention. All chemical weapons must be destroyed. Destruction of chemical weapons is the most important undertaking

made by every State Party to the Convention. We urge all possessor States to take necessary steps to expedite their destruction processes.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation welcomes the completion of destruction of Syrian chemical weapons and progress made so far in the matter of destruction of Syria's chemical weapons production facilities. We hope that the remaining task of destruction will be completed in the earliest possible time.

We have also taken note of the recent report of the Declaration Assessment Team. We appreciate the DAT's work which has been undertaken in challenging circumstances. It is our expectation that the DAT will continue to receive full cooperation from Syria and all the unresolved issues would be resolved fully in the spirit of trust and cooperation.

My delegation is deeply concerned with the reports of the Fact-Finding Mission-Bravo in Syria which concluded that there is a high degree of probability that some of those identified as being involved in the alleged incident in Darayya on 15 February 2015 were at some point exposed to sarin or a sarin-like substance. The possibility of such chemical weapons and toxic chemicals having been used by terrorists cannot be ruled out. Therefore, this incident should be thoroughly investigated to reach a final conclusion.

My delegation has noted the First report of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) which has been transmitted to DG by the Head of JIM. My delegation expects that JIM will carry out its mandate in an objective, impartial and professional manner as we await its final report.

My delegation is also deeply concerned with recent reports that ISIS/ISIL has acquired possession of mustard gas and capability of its delivery. Our work in the EC should help to eliminate the possibility of any future use of chemical weapon anywhere.

Mr. Chairman

My delegation welcomes the decision adopted by the EC-M-51 on destruction of the remaining Category 2 chemical weapons stockpiles in Libya so as to prevent the possibility of these CWs falling into the hands of terrorists. In this regard, urgent follow-up action should be taken by the OPCW to effectively respond to threats posed by terrorists in Libya.

Mr. Chairman,

It has been our consistent position that the use of chemical weapons anywhere and by anybody under any circumstances cannot be justified and the perpetrators of such abhorrent acts must be held accountable.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the core commitments pledged by each Member State to the Convention is to promote the peaceful uses of chemistry as obligated under Article XI. Chemistry and chemical technologies hold the key to confront many of the present day challenges. It should, thus, be the aim of all stake-holders of the Convention to ensure the fullest possible exchange of chemicals, equipment, scientific and technical information for the peaceful uses of chemistry. In this regard, we welcome the recent initiatives and hope that the gaps in its implementation and expectations of the developing countries would be bridged in a spirit of co-operation and accommodation.

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 since the potential of toxic chemicals falling in the hands of non-state actors, including terrorists, is no longer a hypothetical proposition. In such a scenario, it is our view, that effective national implementation provides a bulwark. We urge all Member States, which have not done so yet, to give priority to effective national implementation measures as contained in Article VII of the Convention.

In this context, India commends the Technical Secretariat for its initiatives, including the Influential Visitors Programme and the Legal Internship Programme. These have yielded positive results, including for drafting and adoption of legislation by a number of State Parties in recent years. However, effective implementation goes beyond just having legislation in place. States Parties also need capacity building, which must be recognized. In this context, we welcome both North-South and South-South cooperation. India would like to reiterate its offer and stands ready to provide assistance and support to fellow State Parties on request.

Mr. Chairman,

India attaches importance to the work of the OPCW Scientific Advisory Board. In its report released last year, a set of 18 recommendations has been proposed. Each of these recommendations has to be carefully assessed in terms of conformity with the provisions of the Convention. Any change contemplated in the current or prevailing verification methodology will need to be crafted in such a way that the needs of the Convention as regards transparency are met without compromising the requirements of the States Parties as regards confidentiality of commercial and technical information. These recommendations require detailed deliberations before decisions are arrived at by consensus.

Mr. Chairman

With regard to the future priorities of the Organisation, we welcome the decision made by CSP-20 on the establishment of a Working Group to discuss and formulate a document on the future priorities of the OPCW. We believe that the focus of OPCW should remain the complete elimination of all categories of chemical weapons. We expect discussions in the Working Group to address all issues related to the future of the Organisation in a comprehensive manner.

Mr. Chairman,

India welcomes the establishment of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach (ABEO) and congratulates all its newly appointed members. We look forward to the deliberations of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach and its recommendations to enhance awareness about the Convention.

My delegation also looks forward to the first 'OPCW Day' proposed to be observed from 2-4 May 2016.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, I take this opportunity to compliment and congratulate you for your leadership by which you have guided this Council during the last one year.

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