

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Sheikh Mohammed Belal, Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the Netherlands and Permanent Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons at the Eighty-Third Session of the Executive Council

The Hague, Netherlands, 11 October 2016

Chairperson of the Eighty-Third Session of the Executive Council Ambassador Odette Melono,
Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü,
Distinguished delegates,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me first to welcome back Your Excellency Ambassador Odette Melono as the Chair of the Executive Council. I express my confidence that under Your Excellency's able leadership, the conduct of business of the Eighty-Third Session of the Executive Council will come to a successful conclusion.

I also take the opportunity to register our deep appreciation to the Director General H.E. Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for his comprehensive report delivered in this session and his outstanding leadership to make the OPCW befitting for tomorrow and beyond. I wish to commend the members of the Technical Secretariat for their dedication and hard work in promoting further the role of the Organization in the international disarmament regime and to carry out its functions under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We welcome Her Excellency Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the OPCW H.E. Ms. Haifa Aissami Madah to assume the coordinating role for the NAM CWC States Parties and China at the OPCW. My delegation endorses and fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by Her Excellency Ms. Haifa Aissami Madah, on behalf of the NAM CWC States Parties and China.

I would like to appreciate and commend Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the OPCW His Excellency Dr. Alireza Jahangiri for his dedication and hard work in coordinating the NAM CWC States Parties and China at the OPCW in the last three years.

Bangladesh, as an original signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention, is firmly committed to the aspirations of the OPCW in ridding the world of chemical weapons. Bangladesh deeply appreciates the near universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention and urges the remaining States that are not parties to the Convention to consider acceding to the Convention at the earliest. As the leading contributor to the UN Peacekeeping Operations across the world, Bangladesh deeply values her sacrifice and contribution to world peace. In this spirit, Bangladesh remains eager to contribute to the OPCW in all possible means. We are happy to mention that Bangladesh, in her humble way, is going to organize the "Regional Seminar on Chemical Safety and Security Management" in Dhaka on 18-20 October 2016. We deeply appreciate OPCW for

facilitating and supporting the seminar. We are also eagerly waiting to receive Director General H.E. Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü to Bangladesh during 16-18 October 2016.

Bangladesh, while committed to the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention, acknowledges that the implementation of the Convention will contribute to the international and regional peace and security. Bangladesh reiterates her long-standing principled position towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament, under strict and effective international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction in line with the Convention.

Bangladesh reaffirms that the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as a weapon anywhere by anyone and under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the provisions of the Convention and all norms of international law. We also feel that all chemical weapons must be destroyed at the earliest and we urge all the possessor States to expedite their destruction processes.

Bangladesh appreciates the global consensus against chemical weapons in Syria and welcomes the continued cooperation between the Syrian Government and the OPCW that brought about some remarkable achievements despite multitude of challenges. Bangladesh hopes to see an earlier implementation of the OPCW's on-going missions in Syria. Bangladesh expresses her deep satisfaction on the announcement made by the OPCW confirming the successful removal of precursor chemicals from Libya, on 27 August 2016.

Bangladesh is convinced that the adoption of an action plan for the full and effective implementation of Article XI is paramount. We welcome the States Parties' commitment to promote peaceful uses of chemistry as obligated under Article XI. We urge all the stakeholders to ensure the fullest possible exchange of chemicals, equipment, scientific and technical information for the peaceful uses of chemistry. Bangladesh welcomes the efforts made by the Technical Secretariat to enhance the implementation of Article XI and urges all for a systematic approach to the full and effective implementation of this Article taking into due consideration of the needs of the developing countries.

Bangladesh attaches great importance on education and outreach programmes and welcomes the work done by the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach. We look forward to enhanced awareness about the Convention.

The OPCW has achieved tremendous success since the Convention came into force in 1997 by dint of excellent leadership and the unwavering support of the States Parties. With regard to the future priorities, we welcome the establishment of the open – ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW, to discuss and formulate a document in this regard in order to be adopted at the Fourth Review Conference. Bangladesh believes that the complete elimination of all categories of chemical weapons should remain the priority focus of the OPCW.

Bangladesh is committed to the full implementation of the Convention and believes that the States Parties lacking capacity and capability would get appropriate assistance for enabling them for the full implementation of the Convention.

Bangladesh remains committed to world peace and to the supremacy of diplomacy over conflict under the leadership of our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. We wish to work with you towards furthering disarmament efforts. We look forward to achieving our common goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

Before I conclude, allow me to re-visit Syria. History tells us that Syria is the aggregate of the great Eastern and Western civilisations that once ruled the world. A cradle of human achievements in law, literature, philosophy, commerce, history and religion. The accumulated legacy of so many powerful and ancient cultures. Therefore, it is worth reiterating our strong support and deep appreciation for the progress achieved in Syria. We are aware of the fact that this progress would not have been possible without the vision and pioneering work of so many of you who have been working so hard for incremental gains. We are also confident that at some point, Syria's civil war – now in its sixth year – will end. But how?

The recent surge in brutality in Syria threatens to elevate to extreme levels. The alleged use of chemical weapon only catapulted this risk to a precarious height. More than an existential threat per se, this episode brings us to the verge of being divided along the subtle line of “us” and “them”. This division will only add to the number of victims where humanity is surely to be the perpetual casualty. Therefore, I think it is time for us to listen and ponder to what Secretary General Ban Ki Moon said during his final speech at the UNGA last month.

Let me quote: “Present in this Hall today are representatives of governments that have ignored, facilitated, funded, participated in, or even planned and carried out atrocities inflicted by all sides of the Syria conflict against Syrian civilians.” Unquote.

Therefore, it is perhaps time for us, at least when we deal with the chemical weapon, to bury this dividing “us” and “them” camps to the altar of “humanity”. Let us work together as “human” to restore peace and stability in Syria and across the world.

I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Eighty-Third Session of the Executive Council and published on the OPCW website and extranet.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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