



Statement by
Ambassador J.S. Mukul,
Permanent Representative of India to the OPCW
at the 83rd Session of the Executive Council,
11-14 October 2016.

Madam Chairperson,
Mr. Director General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates

At the outset, I take this opportunity to welcome you back as Chair. We remain confident that under your leadership this session will have a successful conclusion.

I would like to thank the Director General for his comprehensive statement and wish to commend him and the Technical Secretariat for the work being done by them.

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

Madam Chairperson,

India views the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) 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 its full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation. 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.

Madam Chairperson,

My delegation was disappointed at the lack of consensus on Syria at the 82nd Executive Council meeting, which had even prevented this Council from adopting its report. We hope that we can reach a consensus regarding Syria in this session.

Since the last Executive Council meeting, not much progress has been achieved in the matter of destruction of Syria's remaining Chemical Weapons Production Facilities due to the prevailing security situation. However, we hope that this process would be completed in the earliest possible time.

As regards the gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies identified by the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), we reiterate the need for further consultations between Syria and the Technical Secretariat with a view to fully resolving all the outstanding issues in a spirit of trust and cooperation.

My delegation has read the recent Report of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) and we are extremely concerned with the findings of the JIM regarding the use of chemical weapons in Syria. We await the final report of the JIM, a United Nations-led mechanism constituted pursuant to mandate given by the UN Security Council Resolution 2232(2015). Meanwhile, as in the past, India stands ready to join any consensus decision of the Executive Council on Syria.

Madam Chairperson,

My delegation is deeply concerned with reports at acquisitions of chemical weapons and their delivery system by ISIS/ISIL and continuous use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals in Syria and Iraq by terrorists. We believe that our work in the Executive Council should help to eliminate the possibility of any future use of chemical weapons.

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

Madam Chairperson,

With regard to progress in destruction of Libyan remaining chemical weapons stockpiles, my delegation welcomes the UNSCR 2298 (2016) and the subsequent EC decisions which paved the way for successful removal of the remaining Category 2 chemical weapons stockpiles from Libya for their destruction abroad. We can take satisfaction from the progress achieved based on consensus decisions of this Council. We would like to compliment

Libya and all others involved for their efforts under challenging circumstances. We would like to congratulate ourselves for successful conclusion of this daunting task which effectively eliminated the risk of chemical weapons falling into the hands of terrorists. We hope that the destruction of the removed Libyan chemical weapons will be completed within the stipulated time frame.

Madam Chairperson,

One of the core commitments pledged by each Member State to the Convention is to promote the peaceful uses of chemistry. My delegation requests all Member States to remain engaged for strengthening the implementation of Article XI. We are looking forward to participating in the Review & Evaluation Workshop on Article XI proposed to be held in November 2016.

Madam Chairperson,

My delegation attaches importance to national implementation. We are happy that the Technical Secretariat is actively encouraging and assisting States Parties to implement Article VII more effectively. As a State Party in the forefront of national implementation, India is happy to share its knowledge and experience in implementing Article VII of the Convention and to reiterate its commitment to work with other States Parties and Technical Secretariat towards this end.

Madam Chairperson,

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. The 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. In this regard, my delegation notes the efforts of the Chairpersons of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors.

Madam Chairperson,

With regard to the Open Ended Working Group on Future Priorities (OEWG-FP) of the Organisation, my delegation would like to thank the two Co-Chairpersons- Ambassadors of Canada and South Africa- for setting the ball rolling on this important mechanism. We believe that the focus of OPCW

should remain the complete elimination of all categories of chemical weapons. The work of the OEWG-FP should be States Parties-driven to address all issues related to the future of the Organisation in a comprehensive manner. My delegation will engage actively in the OEWG-FP bearing in mind time-tested methods of work of our Organisation, particularly decision-making. We would like to see the work of this OEWG-FP progress through established channels of the policy-making organs (PMOs) without any artificial timelines. On this basis, my delegation will participate constructively in the OEWG-FP to which we attach importance.

Madam Chairperson,

One of the important tasks of this Session is the adoption of Draft Decision on Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2017. My delegation commends the Secretariat for presenting us a balanced Budget and the Facilitators for the work they have done during the consultation process. My delegation hopes that the proposed Draft Decision based on all-round efforts and discussions among Member States would be adopted by consensus.

I would conclude by requesting that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session of the Executive Council and posted on the public websites of the OPCW.

Thank you Madam Chairperson.

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