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PAKISTAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR IFFAT IMRAN GARDEZI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PAKISTAN TO THE OPCW AT THE
EIGHTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,

It is an honour for me to address for the first time the OPCW Executive Council as Pakistan's Permanent Representative. And I begin by expressing to you the full support of my delegation in what we hope will be a productive and successful session of the Council.

I thank the Director-General for his detailed report on the activities of the Organisation and the progress made in important areas during the inter-sessional period.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the States Parties belonging to the Non-aligned Movement and China.

The fundamental reason for our participation in the Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW is our unshakable commitment to the total prohibition of chemical weapons. It is indeed tragic that despite the universal condemnation of chemical weapons, we continue to receive reports about their use.

The third report of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigation Mechanism is the latest such account. In its decision on the reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission adopted on 4 February last year, the Council reaffirmed its condemnation of the use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances and emphasised that any use of chemical weapons anywhere at any time by anyone and under any circumstances is unacceptable and would violate international law. My delegation reaffirms its commitment to that declaration and will continue to participate constructively in endeavours that seek to strengthen the norms of the Convention.

In order to advance the goals of the Convention, Pakistan continually supports activities that make a practical contribution to the work of the Organisation. This includes hosting cooperative programmes, including, basic and advanced regional and international assistance and protection courses. The fifth International Advanced Course on Assistance and Protection was successfully held in Islamabad from 16 to 20 November 2015 and was attended by 24 participants from 18 States Parties. This year, Pakistan intends to hold the Sixth Advanced Course on Assistance and Protection from 14 to 18 November. We hope



that, as in the previous years, participants from different States Parties will benefit from this course.

Organising these programmes also underlines the priority we attach to the Convention's provisions relating to international cooperation and assistance as well as peaceful uses of chemistry.

As we embark on the important exercise of determining the future priorities of our Organisation, we believe that international cooperation will occupy a salient position. Programmes in this field widen the stakeholder base for the Convention and provide greater visibility for the Organisation.

This in turn translates into greater awareness for effective national implementation as well as stronger support for the achievement of the overall aims of the Convention.

The Chemical Weapons Convention has now been in operation for nearly 20 years. Next year will mark two decades since it entered into force. And in 2018, States Parties will meet in the form of the Fourth Review Conference. The coming months offer us a valuable opportunity to review the work of our Organisation, its achievements as well as its challenges in ensuring that the permanent prohibition of chemical weapons represented by the Convention continues to attract strong international support.

While we commend the efforts of the Director-General in instituting measures for greater efficiencies in the Secretariat, ensuring that the Organisation is adequately resourced while its structure is adjusted to the current and anticipated programmes represents a crucial part of the longer term vision for the OPCW. We therefore approach the Draft Programme and Budget for 2017 in a positive spirit. In staffing the Organisation, we will continue to support the objective of securing merit on a broad geographical basis.

The establishment of the Advisory Body on Education and Outreach is a timely initiative. We hope that the work of this Committee will facilitate our common objective of promoting greater awareness of and support for the Convention globally.

Included in the agenda of this session is the subject of countering chemical terrorism. The decision of the Executive Council adopted on 7 December 2001 and the report of the Third Review Conference provide an adequate framework for the Organisation to make its contribution. The experience of the OPCW in promoting capacity building for national implementation as well as in the field of assistance and protection can be widely shared. At the same time, the efforts of our own States Parties for prevention and response can be supported by enhancing programmes in such areas as chemical safety and security.

I would like to conclude my statement by once again underlining the importance we attach to the work of this Council. The OPCW has in recent years faced difficult challenges and succeeded because States Parties remained committed to the Convention and have sought consensus. I feel confident that we will continue to work in this positive spirit in order to conclude this session of the Council successfully. I request that my statement be circulated as an official document of the Eighty-Third Session of the Executive Council.

Thank you