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**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SHEIK MOHAMMED BELAL
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
TO THE OPCW AT THE EIGHTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

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

Allow me to begin with a tribute to Ambassador Jan-Lucas van Hoorn, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the OPCW, if for any solace to this great soul, we shall continue our work as ardent activists of the Convention as he was.

I welcome Your Excellency Ambassador Odette Melono back as the Chairperson of the Executive Council. We are confident that under your able guidance and leadership, the conduct of business of this session will come to a successful conclusion.

The delegation of Bangladesh wishes to thank the Director-General for his report, as well as the Vice-Chairpersons for their respective reports. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah, on behalf of the NAM CWC States Parties and China.

Distinguished delegates,

We are passing through an earth shaking challenging time. More and more incidents of use of chemical weapons or chemicals as weapons are being reported. From Da'esh to rogue States to States Parties are being drawn into this nightmarish race to the bottom.

In such a challenging time this Organisation, humanity's best hope against the use of chemical weapons, could hardly afford to engage itself into meaningless debates of "doing something" or "doing nothing.". These are false choices. With our preoccupation primarily with the Syrian Arab Republic, we could hardly afford to be mere onlookers for incidents at the fringe or seemingly clouded without full fathom certainties.

My delegation, while fully affirms and reiterates its utmost support for the Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW, would like to see, as do other States Parties, a comprehensive verification as well as unfailing response mechanisms should the occasion so demand.



More than anything else, the norms of the Convention could only be upheld if we show zero tolerance for the use of chemical weapons or the use of toxic chemicals as weapons. This has tragically re-emerged as a grim reality and is a negation of fundamental norms of the Convention, which are regarded as universal. In this context, we wish to commend the Permanent Representative of Malaysia, Ambassador Ahmad Nazri Yusof, for his statement and also hereby align with the relevant recommendations put forward by the delegation of the Republic of Korea towards furthering the Convention.

We in Bangladesh would, therefore, like to urge the remaining States that are not Parties to the Convention to consider acceding to the Convention at the earliest. Bangladesh, as the leading contributor to the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations across the world, deeply values its sacrifice and contribution to world peace. In the same spirit, Bangladesh remains eager to contribute to the OPCW with every possible means.

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.

With regard to the future priorities, we welcome the work done so far by the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW guided by the Co-Chairs, Ambassador Sabine Nölke of Canada and Ambassador Bruce Koloane of South Africa. Bangladesh encourages continued discussion to formulate a document in this regard in order to be adopted at the Fourth Review Conference.

We appreciate the global consensus against chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and welcome the continued cooperation between the Syrian Government and the OPCW that brought about some remarkable achievements despite a multitude of challenges. Bangladesh hopes to see an earlier implementation of the OPCW's on-going missions in the Syrian Arab Republic. Bangladesh expresses her deep satisfaction on the successful removal of precursor chemicals from Libya.

Bangladesh continues to fulfil its obligations under Article VII of the Convention relating to national implementation measures. We deeply appreciate the active encouragement and support of the Technical Secretariat to this end. Bangladesh believes that the States Parties lacking capacity and capability would get appropriate assistance and technical support for enabling them for the full implementation of the Convention.

Bangladesh takes note of the latest report presented by the Director-General regarding the Rapid Response and Assistance Mission (RRAM) mechanism to strengthen its capabilities in the field of protection and assistance. Bangladesh hopes that this mechanism be applied in a manner consistent with the Convention, upon request from a State Party experiencing an emergency, and in need of special measures of assistance.

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 recognises the importance of education and outreach programmes in achieving the main objectives of the Convention and welcomes the work done by the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach. We look forward to enhanced awareness about the Convention.

We would like to emphasise that the employment of personnel in the Technical Secretariat has to be fair. Bangladesh believes that it is imperative to ensure an equitable geographical and balanced gender representation, particularly at the professional level in the Technical Secretariat. We welcome the proposed Junior Professional Officer (JPO) programme and hope that it would address fair geographical and gender representation. In this regard, we would propose that the Technical Secretariat find innovative means like dedicated funding arrangement to cater to the applicants from the least developed States Parties for the proposed JPO programme. With your minimal investment, you will help germinate countless activists of peace in the form of JPOs and interns from the least developed countries.

Bangladesh firmly believes in the collective efforts of all States Parties and hopes that such collaborations would not only work towards saving countless lives, it will also help diverting funds away from core priorities like attaining SDGs and poverty alleviations.

Before I conclude, let us commit once again to achieve our common goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

I ask that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session of the Executive Council.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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