



OPCW

Executive Council

Eighty-Fourth Session
7 – 9 March 2017

EC-84/NAT.25
7 March 2017
ENGLISH only

INDIA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR J.S. MUKUL
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,
Mr Director General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, I welcome you back as Chairperson. We are confident that under your leadership this session will have a successful conclusion. I also take this opportunity to compliment and congratulate you for ably guiding this Council during the past year.

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.

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, the Convention 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.

To this end, 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 taken note of the recent reports of the Technical Secretariat regarding the Syrian Arab Republic. We note that some progress has been achieved in implementation of the Eighty-Third Session of the Executive Council decision as well as in clarifying the gaps,



inconsistencies and discrepancies under challenging circumstances. My delegation would encourage further consultations with the objective to resolve all outstanding issues in a spirit of trust and cooperation.

My delegation is deeply concerned with reports of acquisitions of chemical weapons and their delivery system by the so-called 'Islamic State' or ISIS/ISIL and use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq by terrorists. Similarly, we believe it is important to receive all information regarding the recent incident at an international airport in which a chemical weapon is reported to have been used. In this context, we thank the Ambassador of Malaysia for his statement earlier today. We are convinced that our work in the OPCW must remain focused on eliminating the possibility of any future use of chemical weapons.

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

My delegation welcomes the successful removal of the remaining Category 2 chemical weapons stockpiles from Libya and for their destruction abroad under challenging circumstances. We hope that the destruction of these chemical weapons will be completed within the stipulated time frame.

One of the important features of the Convention is to encourage international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under this Convention, including international exchange of scientific and technical information and chemicals and equipment. We need to develop a comprehensive action plan taking into consideration all proposals submitted by States Parties to strengthen the implementation of Article XI. We urge all States Parties to work in close cooperation to develop a well-defined action plan for the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI.

My delegation believes that the OPCW has a pivotal role to play in prevention and management of "chemical incidents" which may happen, either by accident or by design. In either case, the response has to be effective and swift. This will not be possible without being in a "state of readiness". Prevention is better than cure. For prevention of chemical incidents, safety consciousness has to be inculcated and fostered as an essential ethic to be followed by the chemical industry and its related stakeholders.

With regard to response and assistance mechanism under Article X of the Convention, my delegation notes the establishment of Rapid Reaction and Assistance Mission (RRAM). We believe that this mechanism should be applied in accordance with the Convention and only upon request from a State Party.

While it is true that the Convention is neither a Counter-Terrorism Treaty nor a Chemical Safety Treaty, we note that the OPCW has emerged as a forum for consultation and cooperation between the States Parties which includes the 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. We also firmly believe that the full and effective implementation of all the provisions of the Convention including the National

Implementation under Article VII will make a significant and effective contribution towards global counter-terrorism efforts.

With regard to the Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priorities (OEWG-FP) of the Organisation, my delegation notes the efforts of the two Co-Chairpersons. However, 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 balanced and comprehensive manner. 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 and bearing in mind time-tested methods of work of our Organisation, particularly decision-making by consensus. On this basis, my delegation will continue to participate actively in the OEWG-FP to which we attach importance.

In concluding, Madam Chairperson, I would request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this session and posted on the OPCW's public website.

- - - 0 - - -