

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Iffat Imran Gardezi,**  
**Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the OPCW**  
**at the 86<sup>th</sup> Session of the OPCW Executive Council**  
**(10-13 October 2017)**

**Mr. Chairman,  
Director General,  
Distinguished Delegates,**

**A very good afternoon to you all.**

My delegation is pleased to see you back at the helm of the 86<sup>th</sup> Session of the Executive Council. We assure you of our full cooperation and wish you success.

My delegation aligns 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 Director-General's statement reporting on the activities of the Secretariat and reflecting on the substance of our work has been, as usual, detailed and thought provoking. We thank him for his continuing effective leadership.

Just a few days ago, the Russian Federation completed the destruction of its chemical weapons declared under the provisions of the Convention. The completion of operations at the Kizner Chemical Weapons Destruction Facility marked the destruction of the entirety of the chemical weapons possessed by the Russian Federation. This is not only the major highlight of the inter-sessional period, it is good

news indeed. We commend the Russian Federation which, despite the challenges that it faced, remained committed to its destruction obligations.

Verified elimination of chemical weapons is the first and foremost test of the success of the Convention. With only one possessor State remaining – and we encourage them to remain steadfast – the Convention has moved closer to fulfilling one of its fundamental objectives; a world free from the scourge of chemical warfare.

It is ironic, that on the one hand we have these indisputable landmarks to celebrate, and on the other, we continue to be confronted with the distressing reality of the use of chemical weapons. In a string of chemical weapons attacks investigated by the OPCW Fact Finding Mission, the incident of 4 April earlier this year was one of the gravest on account of the use of sarin. The report of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism which is currently looking into the available evidence to assign responsibility for this cowardly attack is anxiously awaited. We are hopeful that the investigation process would remain transparent and impartial.

Here at the OPCW, our responsibility is to engage in a serious endeavour to ensure that the prohibitions of the Convention are at all times respected and its provisions fully implemented.

This is in addition to the challenge of ensuring the relevance of the Convention in a new era where verification of destruction would no longer be the primary focus for the Organisation. With over 96 percent of the declared stockpiles already destroyed, the process of conscious prioritising through deliberation and consensus is acquiring urgency.

In this process we will no doubt face differing viewpoints. This simply reflects the multilateral character of our Organisation which has however over the years distinguished itself because of its strong culture of consensus. By remaining true to that tradition, we can

indeed proceed to lay the foundations for the future priorities for which, under the guidance of the Director-General, the Secretariat has submitted a number of important resource documents and which is the subject matter of the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW. Pakistan supports the vision to which the Organization aspires by the year 2025 i.e to be *“the premier international organization working for a world free of chemical weapons, with a focus on preventing their re-emergence, by implementing all provisions of the Convention in an effective, efficient, and non-discriminatory manner.”*

The on-going deliberations are important from the perspective of the approaching 4<sup>th</sup> Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Coming at a critical juncture, the Conference offers an invaluable opportunity to set the direction for the Organisation.

Developments in science and technology constitute a vital subject for the Conference for which the OPCW's Scientific Advisory Board will have a crucial role to play. It is our hope that in the preparations leading up to the Conference, States Parties will be facilitated in fully comprehending the advice of the Board on various scientific and technical subjects. This will enable the Review Conference to adopt well informed policy recommendations on topics that impact the implementation of the Convention in rapidly changing world of chemistry and chemical industry.

It is also clear that in the face of the global challenges confronting the goals of the Convention, enhanced international cooperation will be vital to making the Organisation effective in such areas as counter-terrorism, enhancing chemical safety and security and broadening outreach and education.

Most of these issues cut across different articles of the Convention such as Article VII and Articles X and XI.

For example, raising awareness in States Parties about the need for effective controls over chemicals and promoting chemical safety and security, not only strengthens the application of Article VII, it also contributes to counter terrorism objectives.

Having said that, I do wish to underline the stand-alone importance of fully implementing Article XI. We have in the past been successful in arriving at common positions with respect to forward movement on a number of subjects relevant to Article XI. It is important to take this process forward. This can only yield positive and constructive avenues for advancing our collective goal of strengthening the CWC.

We fully support the Secretariat's efforts at broadening the scope and deepening the intensity of interaction with external stakeholders. The work of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach continues to attract our attention. In its latest report the Board has stated that its focus is now on a more targeted approach which we welcome and look forward to its substantial report which is expected to be issued by the end of 2017.

Mr Chairman,

The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year continues to provide a positive backdrop to our work. It is gratifying to note the substantial number of events organised to commemorate this landmark. In keeping with the spirit of the year, Pakistan organized a series of events including an Advanced Chemical Safety Management Symposium in March and an event on Comprehensive Chemical Safety and Security Best Practices for Pakistani Chemical Industry in May 2017, in Islamabad. More recently, Pakistan Chemical Supply Chain Safety and Security Workshop was also held in Islamabad. I am pleased to report to you that in July this year, the Pakistan Chemical Manufacturers

Association (PCMA) signed the Responsible Care Declaration of International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA).

Pakistan appreciates the successful completion of the eighteenth edition of the Associate Programme, which concluded just recently here in The Hague. 32 participants from 31 State Parties including from Pakistan completed this flagship capacity-building programme of the Organization, which should be a matter of great pride for all member states.

While dealing with amendments to the staff regulations and interim staff rules of the OPCW & rehiring of inspectors respectively, Pakistan believes that more discussion needs to take place on these issues. Before taking any decision on the matter, concerns of developing countries need to be addressed in this regard.

Before the year ends, the OPCW would have selected a new Director-General. The decision confirming the appointment of Ambassador Fernando Arias of Spain as the one assuming the reins in 2018 is before the Council. It is a decision which we wholeheartedly endorse. There will be occasion later during the session to explain our reasons for rejoicing this selection just as there will be occasions ahead of us to extol the sterling contributions of our current Director-General.

I request that my statement be circulated as an official document of the Eighty Sixth Session of the Executive Council.

Thank you