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BANGLADESH

**STATEMENT BY MR KAZI RUSSEL PERVEZ
COUNSELLOR AND ALTERNATE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
BANGLADESH TO THE OPCW
AT THE EIGHTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Chairperson of the Executive Council, Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal,
Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I welcome Your Excellency Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal back as the Chairperson of the Executive Council. We express our confidence in you and hope that under your able leadership the conduct of business of this session will come to a successful conclusion.

The delegation of Bangladesh wish to thank the Director-General for his informative and comprehensive report, as well as the Vice-Chairpersons for their respective reports presented at this session. We would like to commend Director-General, His Excellency Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü and his team in the Technical Secretariat for their hard work and dedicated efforts in the implementation of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and for advancing our common goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

The delegation of Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement made at this session by the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Her Excellency Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah, on behalf of the NAM CWC States Parties and China.

This year is certainly a special year for the OPCW as it embraces the Twentieth Anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the establishment of the OPCW. As an original signatory to the Convention, Bangladesh proudly joins the celebration of the Twentieth Anniversary of the establishment of the OPCW. The enviable success of the Chemical Weapons Convention over the last twenty years is certainly the result of the collaborative efforts and commitment of the States Parties, chemical industry, scientific community, and civil society coupled with the competence of the Technical Secretariat. In this spirit, the Honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, issued a message in April this year on this auspicious occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary. In her message, the Honourable Prime Minister expressed Bangladesh's firm commitment to the aspirations of the OPCW in making the world safer by eliminating the threat of chemical weapons both by destroying the stockpile and preventing the re-emergence of such a weapon in any form, and



reiterated utmost support of Bangladesh for the Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW towards achieving our common goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

Bangladesh believes that on the occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the OPCW, it should be our collective endeavour to spread the message of our common goal of a world free of chemical weapons with particular emphasis on eliminating the threat of chemical weapons by destroying the stockpiles and preventing re-emergence. In this regard, I am happy to inform you that jointly with the OPCW, the National Authority of Bangladesh is hosting an International Seminar on Advanced Chemical Safety and Security Management in Dhaka on 18 and 19 October 2017 in commemoration of the Twentieth Anniversary of the establishment of the OPCW. We are pleased to inform you that H.E. Mr Hamid Ali Rao, Deputy-Director General of the OPCW will be joining the opening ceremony of the seminar as a special guest. The National Authority of Bangladesh is also hosting a National Symposium on the Chemical Weapons Convention for the Peaceful Use of Chemistry in Dhaka on 17 October this year for the same purpose. This is a development as a follow-up to the visit of His Excellency Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü to Bangladesh from 16 to 18 October last year at the invitation of the Government of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh attaches paramount importance to the universality of the Convention and, therefore, we would like to strongly urge the remaining States that are not Parties to the Convention to consider acceding to it at the earliest.

We would like to reiterate our long-standing principled position towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament including the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction and reaffirm 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.

While we are perturbed by the reports of use and alleged use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and elsewhere, we have every reason to be joyous for the Russian Federation's completing the destruction of its chemical weapons stockpile. Bangladesh firmly believes that the Russian Federation's completion of the destruction of their chemical weapons stockpiles is a very positive development. We believe that the Russian Federation has set an example before the world expressing its commitment towards a world free of chemical weapons.

While we note progress in disposing of the declared chemical weapons stockpiles in the Syrian Arab Republic, we would strongly encourage further consultations between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Technical Secretariat to resolve all outstanding issues in a spirit of confidence and cooperation.

We have taken note of the reports of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria on the incidents of the use of sarin or a sarin-like substance in Khan Shaykhun on 4 April 2017 and the involvement of sulfur mustard in the incident in Um Housh on 16 September 2016. We would like to reiterate our strong condemnation on the use of sarin or a sarin-like substance as weapons and sulfur mustard in the Syrian Arab Republic. We look forward to receiving further reports of the FFM on its ongoing activities in the Syrian Arab Republic, including on the incident of 30 March 2017 in Ltamenah.

Bangladesh continues to fulfil its obligations under Article VII of the Convention relating to national implementation measures. We deeply appreciate the encouragement and active 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. We would also like to urge all for a systematic approach to the full and effective implementation of Article XI taking into due consideration of the needs of the developing States Parties.

Bangladesh recognises the importance of future priorities of the OPCW, and in this regard commends the work done so far by the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities, guided by the Co-Chairs, Ambassador Sabine Nölke of Canada and Ambassador Bruce Koloane of South Africa. We would like to encourage continued discussion to formulate a document in this regard for its adoption at the Fourth Review Conference next year.

We would like to re-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 believe that the proposed JPO programme would be an important step towards equitable geographical representation. As a capacity-building measure, we hope that the Technical Secretariat will find innovative means like dedicated funding arrangement to cater to the applicants from the developing States Parties for the JPO programme.

This year, all members of this Executive Council, and in fact, all States Parties have a very important issue of appointing a new Director-General for this august body. Consistent with our conviction that the appointment process should be fair, open, and transparent in order to ensure wider support for the incoming Director-General, we express our sincere appreciation to you for your steering the process robustly, fairly, openly and transparently. Bangladesh hopes that this session of the Council will be able to recommend the consensus-based candidate, His Excellency Ambassador Fernando Arias of Spain, to the next Conference of the States Parties for the very interest of this successful Organisation.

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, Mr Chairperson.

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