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ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DR ALIREZA JAHANGIRI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO THE
OPCW AT THE EIGHTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

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

Please allow me, at the outset, to welcome you back, Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal as the Chairperson of the Executive Council. I am confident that under your able leadership this Council will be steered to a successful conclusion.

I would like to thank the Director-General, Ambassador Üzümcü, for his comprehensive statement and wish to commend him and the Technical Secretariat for the work done by them.

My delegation also would like to associate itself with the statement delivered by Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

We commend the efforts made by you as the Chairperson of the Executive Council, with the cooperation of the Executive Council members, the Regional Groups Coordinators, and the Technical Secretariat for carrying out extensive consultations and convening three rounds of straw polls in the election of new Director-General of the Organisation. The constructive engagement of all relevant parties made the process transparent, smooth and inclusive. We also would like to thank all seven candidates for their participation in this process.

The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the emerging consensus on His Excellency, Ambassador Fernando Arias of Spain, as the new Director-General of the OPCW, to be formally recommended by this Council to the Twenty-Second Session of the Conference of the States Parties. My delegation extends its best wishes to Ambassador Arias and is committed to support him in achieving the aim of having a world free of chemical weapons.

Over the last 20 years, the Chemical Weapons Convention has been remarkably successful in achieving universality and attaining the position of the most effective instrument in the field of disarmament. In this context, my delegation hereby, strongly calls on the few remaining outsiders to accede to the Convention without further delay and precondition. We also



emphasise that after 20 years of the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the few non-parties should not enjoy its advantages, which can undermine their motivation to accede to the Convention.

I would like to reaffirm that accession of the few remaining outsiders, in the Middle East, to the Convention can pave the way to realise the long lasting idea of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction. This is in fact a meaningful step forward to fulfilling the plan of the universality of the Convention.

We commend all constant efforts of the Director-General in persuading outsiders to join the Convention.

The destruction of all remaining chemical weapons is one of the main commitments under the provisions of the Convention.

My delegation welcomes completion of operations at the Kizner Chemical Weapons Destruction Facility, which marks the completion of the full destruction of the declared chemical weapons by the Russian Federation, and urges all possessor States to take every necessary step to expedite their destruction processes. The Russian Federation's intension and progress to destroy its chemical arsenals before the revised deadline proves that if there is a will, there is a way; that is, the other possessor States shall follow the same path. We urge the Technical Secretariat to enter into engagement with the remaining possessor States to accelerate destruction of their remaining chemical stockpiles.

Twenty years after the entry into force of the Convention, the OPCW is facing a new challenge in achieving its goal of a world free of chemical weapons. Over the recent years, terrorist groups, due to conflict and war circumstances have increasingly used chemical weapons. These groups are never hesitant in accomplishing their political objectives via all available ways and means including use of chemical substances against innocent civilians.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a main victim of the use of chemical weapons, encourages all States Parties to intensify their efforts in combating chemical terrorism as one of their priorities and to refrain from instigating, financing, planning and assisting terrorist activities. The perpetrators of chemicals attack and their supporters should be held accountable.

Using chemical weapons and toxic chemicals by the terrorist groups, in particular Daesh and Al-Nusrah Front, in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq needs to be coped with strongly and immediately by the international community. We should double our efforts to find swift solutions to prevent chemical weapons and toxic chemicals to fall into the hands of terrorist groups. The leading role of the OPCW in carrying out appropriate investigations and enabling States Parties through capacity-building programmes and providing assistance to victims of terrorist attacks is beyond any question.

The Syrian Arab Republic, despite facing the difficult situation, has taken appropriate steps to fulfil its obligations and commitments under the Convention over the last four years.

Successful removal and destruction of the chemical weapons arsenals in a very short period of time and under unsecured conditions prove the level of extensive cooperation between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Technical Secretariat. This cooperation has led to the implementation of the obligations of the Syrian Arab Republic, based on the Convention and

the Executive Council decisions, the outcome of which is satisfactory consultation of the Technical Secretariat with the Syrian authorities that has been acknowledged in the latest report of the Director-General on this issue. We are of the view that this process can be similarly used in resolving the other outstanding issues in a transparent manner. We welcome the approach of the Syrian Arab Republic by declaring additional units in the SSRC, as reflected in the Director-General's report. We believe that such a declaration should not be interpreted as admitting that some prohibited activities under the Convention were conducted in these units, but to give assurances and enhance confidence measures by the Syrian Arab Republic.

On the alleged use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, no one other than those who support the terrorist groups such as Daesh and Al-Nusra Front and those who have a political agenda in this technical Organisation, would believe that a sovereign State which has the upper hand in its fight against the terrorist groups and at the same time is under the auspices of the OPCW has used chemical weapons.

We have all observed that the Syrian Arab Republic has called the Technical Secretariat on several occasions to dispatch FFM to investigate, on-site, the alleged uses of chemical weapons in its own territory. These repeated requests per se indicate that the Syrian Arab Republic is not involved in the use of chemical weapons.

One of the specific features of the Convention is to encourage international cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention. According to the Convention, the States Parties have a strong commitment to promote the economic and technological development through international exchange of chemicals, equipment, and scientific as well as technical information. We also believe that taking unilateral coercive measures in particular imposing discriminatory restrictions on the trade and exchange of technology, materials, equipment, and so on, are against the letter and spirit of the Convention.

As we appreciate the work of the Technical Secretariat in the field of implementation of Article XI, we are of the view that any action without allocating appropriate human and financial resources in the regular budget of the OPCW to promote international cooperation is considered an insufficient measure. With the Technical Secretariat's engagement in this process, one should not neglect the required role and commitment of the developed States Parties in the fulfilment of Article XI.

We welcome the agreement made by States Parties to convene the Second Annual Review and Evaluation Workshop on Full Implementation of Article XI to be held on 21 November 2017, and encourage all States Parties to participate in the workshop actively to share information and ideas for the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI. We hope that this deliberation will lead to a concrete action plan to fulfil Article XI.

It is almost one year since the OEWG for Future Priorities of the OPCW started constantly to discuss the shape and format of our Organisation for the years to come. We emphasise that any initiative in this regard should be totally consistent with the framework of the Convention and keep disarmament as the main priority of the OPCW, as there are still actors with chemical weapons capability that pose a severe threat against peace and security in the world.

Last but not the least, in recent years, we have seen, several times, proposals to revise or to freeze implementation of financial and administrative regulations of the OPCW. We should refrain in future to propose frequent amendments, which can undermine integrity and credibility of the regulations.

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

Thank you.

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