



OPCW

Executive Council

Eighty-Seventh Session
13 – 15 March 2018

EC-87/NAT.16
14 March 2018
ENGLISH only

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-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

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

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

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

I would also like to express my gratitude to Ambassador Weaka Puja of Indonesia as the Chairman of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Fourth Review Conference for his dedicated efforts.

Please allow me to seize this opportunity to also welcome the appointment of new Ambassadors to join the OPCW and wish them the best success in their future endeavours.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is fully associated to the statement delivered by Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the NAM CWC States Parties and China.

My delegation welcomes the completion of the full destruction of the declared chemical weapons by the Russian Federation, Iraq and Libya.

There is no doubt that the existence of weapons of mass destruction continues to pose a threat to international peace and security. Therefore, my delegation remains seriously concerned that the final extended deadline for the destruction of chemical weapons has not met by some States Parties. In this connection, we urge the only remaining Possessor State Party to take every necessary measure to expedite its destruction process with a view to ensuring its compliance with the decisions taken by PMOs.



My delegation attaches great importance to the Convention and full implementation of all its provisions. At this stage, my delegation hereby, strongly calls on the few remaining outsiders to accede to the Convention without further delay and preconditions, particularly those whose non-adherence is a cause of serious concern. The Technical Secretariat is also requested to continue intensifying its efforts with a view of achieving full universality at the earliest possible date and report the progress made thereon.

We also emphasise that after two decades of the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the non-parties should not enjoy advantages and benefits it offers to States Parties.

International concerns grow about the threat of chemical weapons falling into the hands of terrorist groups, inter alia Daesh and Al-Nusrah Front, who have used or have shown their obvious intent to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer, or use chemical weapons, and it could distinctly spell disaster for humanity. To this end, it should be addressed strongly and immediately. It is totally clear that the globalised nature of terrorism requires united and comprehensive reaction by the international community through taking consistent actions to ensure accountability and to bring the perpetrators and their logistic as well as financial supporters to justice. Lessons learned from the critical situation in the Syrian Arab Republic have demonstrated that without the support of States no terrorist group can survive. Besides legal actions, political will of the States Parties is urgently needed to eradicate the terrorist groups involving in the use of chemical weapons.

We appreciate the contribution of the OPCW in combating chemical terrorism, nevertheless, it should be taken into account that the Organisation is engaged in professional and technical tasks and its mandate is not dedicated precisely to the specific issue of terrorism.

Damascus in acceding to the Convention has evidently indicated its national will to abide by international norms and rules. Having been confronted with the critical conditions, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has precisely shown its positive approach by completing the destruction of its chemical weapons and related facilities. It is worth mentioning that the Syrian National Authority has never hesitated to provide all necessary information upon the request by the Technical Secretariat.

In this regard, I would like to point out, for example, the recent report by the Director-General on the status of implementation of Executive Council decision with reference number EC-87/DG.15 (dated 23 February 2018), in which it was explicitly stated there that the Syrian Arab Republic has provided the necessary cooperation during the inspections and provided access to the selected areas for the inspectors within both round of inspections in Barzah and Jamraya. Moreover, it was noted that the inspection team didn't observe any activities inconsistent with the obligations under the Convention.

All these prove the constructive cooperation made by the Syrian Arab Republic, and all the more, encourage all States Parties to provide technical assistance to the Syrian Arab Republic to improve its national capacity building in order to address its remaining commitments. We also encourage the high-level consultation process between the Syrian National Authority and Technical Secretariat to be continued to put an end to all outstanding issues.

It is necessary to ensure that the OPCW, within its mandate, works closely with the Syrian Arab Republic to clarify the situation in connection with all cases of alleged use of chemical

weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. This requires competent and meticulous work of all the missions of the OPCW, established to conduct investigations or to assist the Syrian Arab Republic. It is important that the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) acts strictly in accordance with the high standards of the Chemical Weapons Convention and present verified, unquestionable, results of investigations that re-create a real picture of what happened. We are convinced that further work on the Syrian track should be of a technical nature and should be carried out on a pragmatic and depoliticised basis. Certainly, one of the measures could help on this is updating terms of reference of the FFM.

According to Article XI, 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, and equipment are against the letter and spirit of the Convention.

We expect that the result of the Second Annual Review and Evaluation Workshop on Full Implementation of Article XI lead to a concrete action plan.

On Article VII, my delegation believes that well-organised efforts with adequate resources for full implementation of the provisions of this Article can be reached through a tailor-made approach taking into account the priorities of States Parties.

In the same line, we have reviewed the non-paper proposed by the facilitator of Article VII which is not resulted from the facilitations discussion. Since it greatly expands the scope of the obligations of the States Parties, it needs to be reformatted and revised. It should not be forgotten that this Article has its plan of action and a fortiori it doesn't require a new action plan.

It is almost more than one year that the Open-Ended Working Group on Future Priorities has started constantly to discuss the shape and format of our Organisation in the years to come and we expected that this Working Group should be within the scope of the Chemical Weapons Convention in a balanced manner taking into account the interest of all States Parties. By the way, in some cases, the recommendations go beyond the Convention.

Once again, we emphasise that any initiative should be totally consistent with the framework of the Chemical Weapons Convention accordingly and keep chemical 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.

With regard to the text drafted by the Open-Ended Working Group on the Fourth Review Conference, it is necessary that the views and comments of all States Parties be considered in all meetings and during the whole process of discussion on the relevant topics. We are of the view that the concerns of the States Parties are not fully reflected in the summary reports. However, those aforementioned summaries are not considered as consensual texts.

My delegation firmly believes that the review process should uphold the Convention in its entirety and reiterates its commitment to the effective and balanced implementation of all provisions of the Convention. Furthermore, the review process should not go beyond the obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

In this context, the Islamic Republic of Iran would like to encourage all States Parties in close consultations with their regional groups to actively participate and contribute to the transparent, balanced, and consensus-driven discussions in the Working Group.

As regards the framework for the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) and its Temporary Working Groups including the Temporary Working Group on Investigative Science and Technology, their reports should not consist of political approaches.

Last but not least, with regard to the recent conference in Paris, we do believe that it was aimed at a political goal which severely jeopardise the credibility and effectiveness of the Chemical Weapons Convention and undermines the existing international negotiated mechanism to counter the use of chemical weapons as well as to identify the perpetrators of the use of such weapons.

Before closing my statement, Mr Chairperson, I would like to express two comments: First, on the issue raised by the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, we are of the view that the issue should be settled through the existing mechanism of the Convention without any prejudgement based on unverified allegations.

Second, in response to the statement delivered by the delegate of Canada, we strongly believe that the country who supported Saddam's regime and kept silent the use of chemical weapons by that regime against the innocent people of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq, is not in a position to talk about moral responsibility. In addition, it is unfortunate that this country has no efforts to make non-State actors using chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq accountable.

In conclusion, 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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