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IRAN

**STATEMENT BY MR REZA POURMAND, DEPUTY PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO THE OPCW AT THE
FIFTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate to Ambassador Sheikh Mohammad Belal of Bangladesh on assuming the chairmanship of the Council and assure him on the full cooperation of my delegation. I also thank to Ambassador Odette Melono of Cameroon, former chairperson of Executive Council for her dedication.

I would like also to thank H.E. Mr Ahmet Üzümcü, Director-General of the OPCW for his statement and the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) team for their presentation on the Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria regarding an alleged incident in Khan Shaykhun, Syrian Arab Republic in April 2017.

The Islamic Republic of Iran at the highest level condemns any use of chemical weapons, anywhere, by any one and under any circumstances. We are also determined to fully support any effort against all weapons of mass destruction, in particular chemical weapons. In this context, the Sardasht incident is a clear manifestation of the hate of our people against chemical weapons.

This week on the thirtieth commemoration of victims of Sardasht, which was of an attack by chemical weapons, and also on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the establishment of the OPCW, we had an honour to host Director-General to visit Tehran.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has received two reports by the Director-General on the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria, the first one, dated 1 May 2017 regarding the incident in Um-Housh on 16 September 2016, as reported in the note verbale of the Syrian Arab Republic number 113 on 29 November 2016, and also the second one, dated 29 June 2017 regarding an alleged incident in Khan Shaykhun on 4 April 2017.

However, we believe that the information provided in the most recent report is not enough to assist the Council to reach any conclusion in its future deliberations on this issue. The very first essential point is that sampling was not through on-site inspections, which is an important element of the comprehensive verification regime. Another issue, which has been widely neglected, is that although the analyses of the samples may indicate the presence of



sarin or breakdown products related to sarin, it is not enough evidence to prove that it was used as a weapon.#

It is also worth mentioning that since all official languages of the Organisation are equally important and enable clear and concise communication on issues in this particular august body, the Technical Secretariat is kindly requested to provide such an important document into all six official languages a few days in advance of Sessions and Meetings.

It is totally clear that the Council is going to hold its Eighty-Fifth regular Session next week in which the update on the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria will be further considered under agenda item 6g. In this due, calling for such an extraordinary Meeting merely to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission, elucidates double standards against the Syrian Arab Republic. The body of evidence is too substantial to disregard.

As we have commemorated the thirtieth anniversary of the victims of the Sardasht chemical attack and their relatives and marked the national day of fighting chemical and biological weapons, let us make sure history never forgets some powers, which put forth claim about the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic under a suspicious and dangerous scenario, are the same powers which not only closed their eyes to the use of illegal chemical weapons and weapons of mass destruction against the Iranian civilians and troops within an eight-year of imposed war, but also got involved in the equipping process and providing support for the criminal regime of Saddam and therefore are complicit in Saddam's crimes.

This Organisation continues to face very difficult circumstances and challenges as we work together to address the threat of chemical weapons. Years ago, and certainly by now, the entire chemical weapons stockpile, and the threat it constitutes to the OPCW and the international community at large, should have been completely eliminated. Though the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles, which is the most important commitment of the States Parties, has still not been fulfilled by some possessor States Parties.

The Islamic Republic of Iran calls on the international community to use all available capacities to stop the production, proliferation and use of any chemical weapons. It also urges all States Parties to become more sensitive to the use and the threat to use of such weapons by such terrorist groups as ISIS and Al-Nusrah Front as well as their regional and international supporters.

The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the level of the cooperation between the Syrian Arab Republic with the Technical Secretariat to resolve the outstanding issues to fulfil its obligations and commitment under the Convention. The Syrian Arab Republic, despite facing the difficult situation, has shown its determination to cooperate with the Technical Secretariat in a transparent manner.

While working together here, at the OPCW as a unique international technical body, we reemphasise that the ultimate solution to the Syrian issue will be a technical one. Therefore, my delegation encourages all States Parties, inter alia, those who follow baseless and or bogus allegations, to provide technical assistance to the Syrian Arab Republic to improve its national capacity building in order to address its remaining commitments rather than politicising the issue.

Al Shayrat air base was attacked with the excuse of being used as base for the use of chemical weapons. Considering such an argument, investigation of Al Sahyrat air base should be put in priority for being able to have an appropriate conclusion. In addition, the Syrian Arab Republic invited the FFM team to visit this site but we were not witness to the acceptance of such offer.

Last but not the least; I would like to reiterate that, all Member States of Convention have accepted the authority of the Organisation as the only mechanism for verification of any use of chemical weapons by any one and anywhere. On 6 April 2017, we were witness to a unilateral attack by one of the Member State of the OPCW against another with the excuse of chemical weapons having been used in Syria, which is the negligence of the authority of OPCW and Convention, and is also in contravention of international law and put the legitimacy of the Organisation in danger.

In closing, may I request that this statement to be circulated as an official document of the Eighty-Fifth Session of the Executive Council and be posted on both the external server and the public website. Thank You.

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