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THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AHMED BAMERNI
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COOPERATION IN THE IRAQI MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AT THE
SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Your Excellency, the Director-General of the OPCW,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Greetings,

I would like to echo those who took the floor before me to congratulate you, Mr Chairperson, and your distinguished deputies on your election for chairing the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. We are confident that your diplomatic experience will direct the works of the Conference towards success and the achievement of the desired objectives. I wish to take this opportunity to thank H.E. Ambassador Julio Roberto Palomo Silva, Guatemala, for the efforts he made while he was in office and to wish him every success in his coming professional life. I would like to welcome the participation of H.E. Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, the Director-General of the OPCW as well as the United Nations Representative in the works of the Conference.

The delegation of my country associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and China. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues in the Asian Group, in particular Ambassador Aziz Chaudhry, Pakistan, the Group Coordinator, for their support to my country nomination for the position of Deputy Chairperson of this Session of the Conference of the States Parties, and to the re-election of Iraq for the membership of the Executive Council for the coming period (2012 to 2014).

I would like to highlight the salient developments in Iraq, in particular those related to its commitment to the international conventions and treaties in the area of disarmament. While endeavouring to build a democratic and institutional State living in peace and security with its people, neighbours and the international community, the Government of my country has been keen to have its obligations in relation to Iraq's stance vis-à-vis weapons of mass destruction, as enshrined in the new Constitution, clearly and specifically reflected in Article 9(E) which provides that "The Iraqi Government shall respect and implement Iraq's international obligations regarding the non-proliferation, non-development, non-production, and non-use of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, and shall prohibit associated equipment,



materiel, technologies, and delivery systems for use in the development, manufacture, production, and use of such weapons". Accordingly, Iraq joined the Chemical Weapons Convention in the beginning of 2009 and submitted its declaration to the OPCW in April of the same year. Since then, the Iraqi relevant institutions have been working, in collaboration with the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the sisterly States in the OPCW, to achieve concrete progress in the implementation of the obligations to dispose of the materials declared by Iraq. One of the most prominent features of this progress, in accordance with the principles of the Convention, is that the Iraqi dossier started with two exceptional concepts which have become today two established facts for the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the Member States. These are the unique status of the Iraqi dossier in relation to the provisions of the Convention, and the fact that the materials existing in the Iraqi territories are remnants of a former chemical programme, and not stockpiled chemical weapons or materials. It is the programme which was destroyed in due time by the relevant international bodies under the auspices of the United Nations during the period 1992 to 1994 and before entry into force of the Convention.

In the light of these facts, the relevant Iraqi institutions are making efforts, in a continued cooperation with the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the Member States, which expressed their intention to support Iraq, to arrive at the optimal and most appropriate solution for the disposal of these remnants as quickly as possible, in order for our people to avoid exposure to any hazards that could result from them, in compliance with Paragraph 10 of Article IV of the Convention, and in implementation of our remaining obligations therein. This cooperation between Iraq and the OPCW Technical Secretariat has led this year to two important results. The first is the visit by the Technical Secretariat inspection team to the declared Iraqi sites last May. The inspection team submitted a positive report to the Sixty-Fifth Session of the Executive Council held last July indicating consistency between the status of the visited sites and the information related thereto, and the content of the Iraqi declaration. The second is the visit paid by H.E. the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Hoshyar Zebari, to the OPCW Headquarters on 8 September. A joint press conference was held with the OPCW Director-General, H.E. Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü. This visit reiterated the importance of materialising the Iraqi foreign policy priorities through interaction with and support to the international organisations related to disarmament, and confirmed, to these organisations, the keen intent of the Government of my country to implement the obligations undertaken by it.

This great attention shown by the Government of my country has been translated into several domestic procedures followed during the course of this year. They included the approval on 12 April 2011 by the Council of Representatives of a budget allocation of approximately USD 55 million, as an initial stage, for the implementation of the liquidation of Al-Muthana Storage Facilities (cancelled) project, designation of the Project Director, formation of taskforces of different specialisations, and initiation of the housing plans for the staff of the project and other civil works.

In the context of Article VII of the Convention, the Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs addressed two letters to the Speaker of the Council of Representatives calling for ratification by the Council of the national legislations in accordance with Article VII of the Convention. As a result of this effort, the Council of Representatives completed the second reading of the draft law which is currently one of the laws to be voted by the Council. I should not fail to thank the Legal Adviser Office of the OPCW for their direct support to and cooperation with the delegation of my country in this regard.

In line with these national efforts, and within the regional entitlements of the West Asia region, the Government of my country informed the OPCW Technical Secretariat, in August, of its intention to host the annual meeting of the Asian National Authorities, in coordination with the States of the Asian Group in the OPCW, and through the Permanent Representation of Pakistan, Coordinator of the Group. We would like to thank the Technical Secretariat for welcoming that offer. I take this opportunity to renew our request to the OPCW Technical Secretariat to provide the necessary support for holding this meeting on the Iraqi territories in order to foster cooperation and coordination between my country and the States of the Group under the auspices of the OPCW and with a view to achieving the objectives of the Convention, including the use of chemistry for peaceful purposes.

Internationally, cooperation and discussions continued between our delegation, the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the delegations of the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom, the last of which was the holding of a bilateral meeting with the German delegation in conjunction with the Sixty-Sixth Session of the Executive Council held last October, to discuss the assistance to be provided to Iraq to conduct the initial assessment of gazes in bunkers 13 and 41, as well as the holding of three-day roundtable meetings hosted by the United States on its territories, in collaboration with the OPCW Technical Secretariat, the United Kingdom and Germany, which resulted in constructive technical discussions and analysis. I take this opportunity to thank the OPCW Technical Secretariat and the afore-mentioned States for their productive cooperation with the delegation of my country in order to assist us to achieve the optimal compliance with the provisions of the Convention.

All these technical activities and events undertaken by the relevant Iraqi institutions will be reflected in a detailed overview to be presented to you in the informal sitting during the Sixty-Seventh Session of the Executive Council to be held in February 2012. In this respect, we stress that, for the coming steps concerning the Iraqi dossier, due regard should be given to paragraphs 8 and 10 of Article IV of the Convention, in particular the modalities for adopting the necessary measures and procedures for the disposal of the Iraqi remnants.

Concerning the response of the international community to the national activity, the United Nations Security Council adopted unanimously its resolution 1957 (2010) by which the international community reflected its full awareness of the Iraqi activities and contributions in the area of disarmament. By virtue of this Resolution, all weapons of mass destruction related measures imposed on Iraq have been terminated. The Government of my country is determined to fulfil all its obligations in this area in a manner that reinforces trust of the international community.

In light of the transparency and cooperation demonstrated by the Government of my country in implementing the provisions of the Convention and its resolve to achieve the full compliance therewith, I would like to stress that the input of the Government of my country and its responsive interaction with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW should be given due regard during the annual review of the Iraqi dossier at the end of the year as part of resolution 1957.

In view of the above, we reaffirm, from this platform, to Ms Mara Marinaki, representing the European Union, and to the Conference, the determination of the Government of my country to destroy all remnants of the Iraqi former chemical programme, in implementation of the provisions of the Convention, as I said at the beginning of my statement, and in fulfilment of

Iraq's international obligations. I would like to recall that, in coordination and consultation with the OPCW Technical Secretariat, and participation of the United Kingdom and Germany delegations, progress has been made in my country's dossier during the period that followed the visit undertaken by the Technical Secretariat inspection team in early May.

I should not fail to mention the tenure policy of the OPCW Technical Secretariat and our support to granting the OPCW Director-General the relevant authority that would enable him to achieve the planned future objectives of the Organisation. We trust in his ability to strike the required balance between achieving the highest levels of competence and specialisation and the widest possible geographical distribution that would allow for gaining experience and keeping abreast with the technical advances, at all levels, upon which our country as well as the other countries can draw. In this regard, we would like to request that Iraqi needs for support from the Organisation be taken into consideration; particularly as it has been deprived from such opportunities for over 20 years.

In conclusion, I reaffirm that the Government of my country is keen to fully comply with the provisions of the conventions and to foster its constructive cooperation with the Technical Secretariat and all Member States with a view to achieving the founding objectives of the Convention, including the establishment of a world permanently free of chemical weapons in which its people can enjoy peace and security.

I wish that this statement be adopted as an official document of this session of the Conference of the States Parties.

Thank you.

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