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**SRI LANKA**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR BUDDHI ATHAUDA  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC  
OF SRI LANKA TO THE OPCW AT THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE  
CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,  
Mr Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset let me express my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Peter Goosen, Ambassador of South Africa, on his election as Chairperson of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. Mr Chairman, I am confident that with your proven leadership and diplomatic skills you will be able to lead us to a successful conclusion of this conference. In this respect, I assure you of my delegation's support and cooperation. I also wish to thank the outgoing Chairman, His Excellency Paul Arkwright, Ambassador of the U.K., for his excellent chairmanship to the Sixteenth Session of the Conference.

The OPCW is a living example of successful multilateralism in the field of disarmament. This year we are celebrating the fifteenth Anniversary of successful implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. In this regard, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to our Director-General, His Excellency Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for his vision and leadership to the OPCW in achieving full and universal implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of NAM countries and China by His Excellency the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

As the disarmament activities are decreasing, while feeling satisfied with the steady progress being made by possessor States to complete the destruction of their stockpiles, we must sustain our quest for creating a world free of chemical weapons. It is not only disarmament but also prevention of re-emergence of chemical weapons, which will be of critical importance towards achieving this goal. It could be achieved only through full and universal implementation of the Convention. This lofty goal is going to keep the OPCW and Convention relevant and more pertinent in the years ahead. In this regard my delegation is ready to continue to cooperate with the States Parties and the Director-General to identify the future priorities for the OPCW.



The Convention is a unique disarmament treaty. It has endowed the Convention with the necessary tools required for the implementation in order to reach the desired goals. While the verification regime is the most important feature that ensured the verified destruction of declared stockpiles, it is all the more important to benefit from the provisions of non-discriminatory implementation, assistance and protection, international cooperation, assistance in national implementation and capacity building.

Sri Lanka has benefited from various training programs at national, regional and international levels provided by the Technical Secretariat which helped the country to create awareness about the Convention, train relevant stakeholders to implement the Convention at all levels and build capacity in technical areas such as chemical emergency management, chemical safety and medical requirements, export controls, customs related issues, chemical management for industrial development, legal assistance to prepare national chemical protection program and national implementation. In this regard while thanking the Technical Secretariat for conducting such a dedicated programme to assist the States Parties in capacity-building to enable them to implement the Convention in letter and spirit, my delegation would like to emphasise the importance of continuing such a cooperation and assistance program as provided for in the Convention under Articles VII, X and XI, until all countries reach the level of full national implementation of the Convention.

Sri Lanka has enacted domestic legislations and regulations covering all areas of the Convention. Annual declarations are made to the Technical Secretariat as per the requirement of the Convention. The National Authority is being strengthened and equipped to be able to implement the Convention countrywide. Sri Lanka, emerging with high prospects of economic development after defeating a three-decade-old terrorism, is relentlessly continuing to voice against all forms and manifestations of terrorism. Although the OPCW is not an anti-terrorism organisation, it has an obligation to contribute to the global efforts against terrorism. The Open-Ended Working Group on Counter-Terrorism in the OPCW should be strengthened as per the current global status and requirements in this area.

Sri Lanka attaches great significance to the goals and objectives of the Convention and reiterates its commitment to continue to promote the values of the Convention through the effective national implementation of it.

It is important to update you that the President of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa, has achieved the goal of peace in Sri Lanka by first and foremost adhering to, and ensuring the basic rights for the people, like free access to education, free health care and justice to all. He eradicated terrorism in Sri Lanka by winning hearts of all citizens, including the minorities. With his current strategy, there is no room for terrorists in Sri Lanka. Thus, there is no room for terrorists to kidnap children to create child soldiers. Sri Lanka is no breeding ground for pirates, drug traffickers and arms smugglers in the Indian Ocean.

Sri Lanka is here today, at this platform, to join hands with the entire international community to create a world free of chemical weapons, a world without barriers and boundaries to enjoy the fruits of peace and security.

Thank you.