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LIBYA

**STATEMENT BY MR AHMED HASSAN WALID
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FOR THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION AT THE
SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,
Excellency, Director-General,
Distinguished ladies and gentlemen members of delegation,

Allow me at the outset, on behalf of the Libyan delegation and on my personal behalf, to congratulate you on your election as Chairperson of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. I wish also to congratulate the elected members of the General Committee of this session. On this occasion, I should not fail to express to the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Mr Ahmet Üzümcü, and to all staff members of the Technical Secretariat, my deep appreciation for their efforts to achieve the objectives of the Convention, to which we all aspire. It is also my pleasure to extend my sincere thanks to H.E. Ambassador Paul Arkwright, for his successful leadership during the previous session of the conference.

Faithful to its duties and obligations as a member of the international community, and giving due regard to the aims and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter with respect to maintaining international peace and security, the elected Libyan Government has affirmed its full observance of the international treaties and instruments that Libya has signed, including the Chemical Weapons Convention. On this basis, my country had committed itself to disposing completely of its remaining chemical weapons stockpile, and is sparing no effort in doing what needs to be done to fulfil this obligation. Therefore, the Libyan authorities are taking the necessary measures that would enable Libya to meet the deadlines for the completion of destruction, in line with the relevant detailed plan. Details of these measures are contained in the Libyan national papers submitted to the Technical Secretariat and the Executive Council.

Endorsing the noble objectives of the Convention, the newly-elected government in Libya is aspiring to strengthen the relationship with the OPCW in order to lay the foundation for a new stage for the horizons of an excellent cooperation with this organisation and its various bodies, with a view to making an effective contribution to attaining the objectives of the Convention, upholding the principles enshrined therein, and complying with its provisions. At the same time, we are committed to opening new channels for a fruitful engagement with the States Parties in order to further the aims of the Convention, in a professional manner that would serve our common interests and ensure a useful cooperation in all related fields and activities. On this occasion, I should also like to offer my sincere thanks to all the States that



took the initiative to provide their assistance to support the programme for the disposal of chemical weapons in Libya, for their good cooperation with us in this respect, in particular Canada, Germany and the United States of America. I also want to express my thanks to all States willing to cooperate with us in relevant areas. I should not fail to express my deepest appreciation to the worthy efforts by the Technical Secretariat and its Director-General to assist Libya in implementing the requirements of the Convention.

One can but feel satisfaction with the progress made in the elimination of an important category of weapons of mass destruction in the world, namely the chemical weapons. This achievement reflects the efficacy of the OPCW in implementing programmes for the complete elimination of chemical weapons, and its continuing efforts to exclude completely the possibility of these weapons being used ever again, anywhere in the world. We are all longing for the day that would mark the irreversible end of chemical weapons, thus clearing the way to broader international cooperation and faster economic growth and technological development, in which progress in chemistry will be harnessed exclusively for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all mankind. This desired objective will contribute to factors conducive to stability in the world, thus helping defuse international tension and set the pillars for global peace, which cannot be built as long as weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, continue to exist.

In addition to enhancing the synergy of the international community to strengthen security and support development, and to prohibiting chemical weapons, this Convention also aims at their total elimination, and calls for providing States Parties with assistance and protection in accordance with Article X thereof. My country takes a growing interest in this Article, as it provides for coordinating the delivery of assistance and the means of protection to any requesting State Party in case of use, or threat of use, of chemical weapons. Therefore, the effective implementation of this Article is a precautionary safety measure that might help minimise the number of chemical weapons victims.

My country highly appreciates the enormous efforts made by the Organisation during the last years to provide assistance to States Parties, and to developing ones in particular, in their implementation of the provisions of the Convention. The OPCW's Africa Programme being one of the Technical Secretariat's key activities in this area, we are of the view that the time has come to possibly add to OPCW efforts in this respect, through the development of measures aimed at assisting States in identifying their stakeholders' real needs, with a view to planning new, targeted, integrated projects and innovative programmes. This would help remedy gaps in the States concerned, and enable them to apply effectively the principles enshrined in the Convention.

Measures for the implementation of obligations under the Convention need to take into account, and keep abreast with, the continuing and growing pace of developments in technological and scientific research. Also, the issue of chemical safety and security, and the challenges that it poses, need a more thorough consideration. Consequently, this matter needs a more appropriate treatment. As you know, although occurring and facing us at a faster pace during the last years, these developments and challenges have not been tackled yet. It is therefore extremely important that the Third Review Conference provide an opportunity to consider these issues and push for drawing up a new approach to dealing with these developments and confronting these challenges. There is an urgent need for a document outlining remedial action for developing such an approach and setting a clear vision that would enable the Policy-Making Organs to identify strategic aims to be agreed on by all the

States Parties, for which appropriate plans and programmes could then be developed. The required support and resources will need to be provided to realise these objectives.

With the overwhelming majority of States having joined the Convention, and only a very few remaining outside its fold, universality is now within reach. However, a source of concern is that some States non-Parties possess chemical weapons. A choice that may be due to a belief that this category of weapons could serve, almost on a par with other unconventional means of warfare, as a potential deterrent, including, in the worst-case scenario, against nuclear weapons, although the former are far from posing the same threat as the latter. Deterrence considerations, compounded by lack of confidence, may explain why some States did not abandon the chemical weapons option.

Setting the pillars for global peace and security requires dealing with factors influencing the decision to join the Convention. This is an international responsibility that calls for a high level of commitment and attention. Indeed, if any chemical weapons were to remain, they would pose a potential threat, somewhere in the world, to the safety of vast numbers of people, and to peace in general. As no part of the problem can be solved in isolation from others, it is very important that the international community tackle issues of disarmament, in particular of all categories of weapons of mass destruction, in an efficient manner, and consider them as interconnected and requiring a radical, credible, and non-discriminatory solution. This would clear the way for resolving many of the challenges to peace issues. As you know, vast numbers of people have endured the horrors and atrocities of nuclear weapons and the effects of exposure to radiation, and many nations have suffered the terrible effects of chemical weapons. The world population having the right to enjoy living in a world free of the threats posed by these terrifying means of mass annihilation, such tragedies must be prevented from ever occurring again, through the complete and effective elimination of all those means of mass destruction. The responsibility for realising this hope lies first and foremost with the concerned States and the goodwill of the international community.

Mr Chairperson,

The universality of the Convention is very important and has acquired a new urgency. Therefore, the delegation of my country stresses the importance of this goal, which requires that all remaining States join the Convention without further delay. We are concerned that chemical weapons exist in the Middle-East, in particular in the Israeli entity in occupied Palestine. This entity possesses huge chemical capabilities and sophisticated chemical weapons, in addition to other prohibited weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, it did not ratify the Convention and is still invoking unfounded arguments that do not stand to logic. This position harms legitimate efforts in the region to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, and hinders confidence-building efforts to reach a just peace in the region, thus undermining international peace and security.

Generally, as long as there are States in the world possessing chemical capabilities and remaining outside the Convention, one can still fear that chemical weapons exist and might be used some day, in some way, either by a State or, if they ever fell in their hands, by terrorist groups. That is why we support efforts by the OPCW and its Director-General to achieve the universality of the Convention and urge States non-Party thereto to join it without delay.

In conclusion, Mr Chairperson, I thank you, and thank all present, for your good attention, and express the wish that this statement be treated as one of the official documents of the Conference.