



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Seventeenth Session
26 – 29 November 2012

C-17/NAT.24
26 November 2012
ENGLISH only

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

**STATEMENT BY H.E. KAZEM GHARIB ABADI
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC
REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO THE ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF
CHEMICAL WEAPONS AT THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,

Please allow me to begin by congratulating Your Excellency, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Peter Goosen on your well-deserved election as the Chairperson of this important Conference. I am confident that under your able leadership, this Conference will be steered to a successful conclusion. I also wish to express my appreciation to the former Chairperson for his efforts during his tenure. I would also like to associate my delegation with the policy statement delivered by H.E Mohammad Mahdi Akhoundzadeh, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran for International Affairs, on behalf of the NAM CWC States Parties and China.

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

It is a privilege for me as the representative of the last and biggest victim of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, namely chemical weapons, to address the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

Today the monument for chemical weapons victims which was dedicated by the Islamic Republic of Iran to the OPCW was unveiled. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to H.E Ahmet Üzümcü, Director-General of the OPCW, for his constructive approach towards the victims of chemical weapons and valuable cooperation for installation of this monument. This monument is to remind us that thousands of innocent people lost their lives due to the use of chemical weapons. Only in my country these all-out inhuman attacks resulted in more than 100,000 chemical casualties and martyrs. Just in the case of Sardasht, a small city in northwestern Iran, as a result of deployment of heavy chemical weapons by the Saddam government, large numbers of civilians, including women and children, were chemically killed or wounded. To ensure that chemical weapons shall not be produced and used ever again, the providers should be exposed to the international community for being held accountable for assisting the Saddam government to commit such heinous crimes.



The Islamic Republic of Iran values achievements in the implementation of the Convention during the past 15 years. Simultaneously we shall not forget that there is still a long way to achieve a world free of all chemical weapons. Existence of chemical weapons threatens international peace and security and undermines the integrity and credibility of the Convention. Therefore, total destruction of all chemical weapons stockpiles continues to remain the key objective of the Convention and the top priority of the Organisation. The major possessor States Parties shall comply with their obligations and accelerate their efforts, within the framework of the Convention and its verification regimes, to destroy all chemical weapons stockpiles.

Article XI is one of the major pillars of the Convention. The aim of this article is to promote free trade of chemicals and chemical equipment among States Parties. Needless to say that agreement in this article has been one of the primary motives of developing countries to join the Convention as well. Unfortunately, almost 15 years after entry into force of the Convention and in spite of the provisions of Article XI and the related decisions by the Conference of the States Parties, the commitments of the States Parties in this field have not been fully met. While my delegation expresses the firm conviction that a plan of action may ensure the full implementation of Article XI, it calls upon the States Parties to remove any discriminatory restrictions such as unilateral sanctions against other States Parties, which affect the Convention's long-term viability and have an adverse impact on the trust existing among the States Parties.

The full and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI of the Convention is an issue that merits careful consideration. Establishment of an oversight mechanism aimed at guaranteeing free trade and chemical technology among the Member States can be considered as significant progress which would contain added value for the Organisation.

My delegation believes that well-organised efforts with sufficient resources for implementation of the provisions of Article X and achievement of a reliable status of readiness by the Organisation for responding to requests for assistance, especially with regard to the needs of victims of chemical weapons, are essential for realisation of the objects of the Convention. Full implementation of this article can only be achieved through maintaining the highest possible standards of coordination and readiness for delivery of assistance by the Organisation and the States Parties as well.

Fortunately after many years of deliberations and consultations on the establishment of the International Support Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons, the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties adopted a decision in this regard. My delegation welcomes this decision and appreciates the goodwill of the Director-General, Technical Secretariat and all delegations for establishment of the Network. The Islamic Republic of Iran contributed EUR 15,000 to the voluntary fund of the Network and encourages all States Parties to contribute to this fund to show their solidarity with the victims of chemical weapons and to enhance the humanitarian aims of the Network.

The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to the Organisation and its future development which is of utmost importance for its effectiveness. However we should bear in mind that any changes in the structure and activities of the Organisation shall not lead to its diversion from the main core objective, namely disarmament. In this regard, we would like to stress that since significant amounts of chemical weapons stockpiles, old and abandoned

chemical weapons are yet to be destroyed, the primary mandate of the Organisation is the total destruction and complete elimination of all categories of chemical weapons.

On the issue of upcoming Third Review Conference, I would like to take the opportunity to inform the delegations that the Islamic Republic of Iran, within the framework of work of the OEWG, prepared five national papers on different Convention-related issues. I would like to appreciate the Chair of the OEWG, Her Excellency Nassima Baghli, Ambassador of Algeria, and the Technical Secretariat for their efforts in preparation of the Third Review Conference. The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to this event and is of the view that the review conference has two main functions. On one hand, it reviews the past activities of the Organisation and implementation of all provisions of the Convention including achievements and shortcomings, and in the other hand, it should reflect the needs and requirements for the future work of the Organisation. We believe that these functions should be considered merely within the scope of the Convention.

Given the importance attached to universal adherence to the Convention and its contribution to international peace and security, the Islamic Republic of Iran advocates a new momentum for the OPCW to intensify its efforts in particular by the Director-General in this area. This is more indispensable to the sensitive region of the Middle East, in which the most dangerous case is the Zionist regime with its clandestine programme to develop chemical weapons. The international community should exert pressure on this regime to accede to the Convention without further delay and precondition and put its facilities under the OPCW verification regime. Regrettably with the rejection of the 2012 Conference on the Middle East WMD-Free Zone, the response to the international community's call once again was defiance by this regime.

I shall emphasise that the I. R. of Iran has proposed the idea of the Middle East Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone for the first time in 1974. Our principle policy is based on the rejection of WMD. Iran also announced its readiness to participate in 2012 Conference, but it seems that unfortunately there is no perspective in this regard due to the destructive policy of one non-Party to all disarmament and arms control treaties.

In this context, while the Convention's export control regime should strictly target non-Parties, it is deplorable that they can easily obtain chemicals and related technologies even scheduled chemicals, which their transfer to non-Parties is prohibited by the Convention. Obviously the implications of this situation resulted in discouraging them to join the Convention. As the Second Review Conference underlined, the objectives of the Convention will not be fully realised as long as there remains even a single non-Party that could possess or acquire chemical weapons. As the OPCW annual reports indicate, regrettably more than 90% of Schedule 3 chemicals transfers are headed to the Zionist regime. This is a clear disregard for the provisions of the Convention and its Verification Annex, and makes no stimulus for non-Parties to acceding to it. Therefore, the policy-making organs should fully address this important issue.

In closing, Mr Chairperson, may I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.