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**STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
AMBASSADOR BHASWATI MUKHERJEE OF INDIA
AT THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES
PARTIES ON THE REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ON THE
PERFORMANCE OF ITS ACTIVITIES (AGENDA ITEM ELEVEN)**

Mr Chairperson,
Distinguished delegates,

It is a privilege and an honour to report to the Conference of the States Parties on the work of the Executive Council during this calendar year. Let me in the first instance extend my warmest congratulations on your election as well as of the Vice-Chairpersons.

I am also reporting on your behalf and would like to pay tribute to your high level of professionalism and negotiating skills which have helped to strengthen the role of the Executive Council as the executive organ of the Organisation.

The Vice-Chairpersons of the Council are to be felicitated for their contribution and for actively facilitating the work on the issues under their respective clusters. Similarly, I would like to thank the Regional Coordinators and facilitators for their valuable contribution throughout the reporting period.

We are fortunate that the Organisation is guided by Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü who has demonstrated strong leadership skills, as well as intellectual ability and consensual approach, which has ensured the highest quality of support and advice by the Technical Secretariat to the Council.

The results of the sessions of the Council held during the period between the Sixteenth Session of the Conference and 13 July 2012 are described in the Report of the Executive Council on the performance of its activities in the period from 16 July 2011 to 13 July 2012 (EC-70/4 C-17/2, dated 28 September 2012). The Council's activities during the period which has elapsed since the cut-off date of that report are described in the report of the Seventieth Session (EC-70/5, dated 28 September 2012).

Allow me to briefly review issues that were considered by the Council at its Seventieth Session and relate to the work of the Conference, or those which derive from its mandates.

1. During the period under review, the Council regularly oversaw the implementation of the Convention by examining the periodic reports provided by the Director-General



on verification activities, international cooperation and assistance, universality of the Convention, and national implementation measures.

2. At the Seventieth Session, in accordance with the decision on final extended deadline of 29 April 2012 (C-16/DEC.11, dated 1 December 2012), the Council considered and noted a report by the Director-General on the overall progress of destruction activities by possessor States Parties. Pursuant to the same decision, the Council also considered and noted the national papers by Libya, the Russian Federation and the United States of America on the progress made on the completion of the destruction of their chemical weapons, including information on measures to accelerate such progress, as well as on appropriate measures in order to meet the planned completion dates.
3. Pursuant to EC-67/DEC.6, dated 15 February 2012, the Council noted a report by the Director-General on the “Overall Progress with Respect to the Destruction of the Chemical Weapons Abandoned by Japan in the People’s Republic of China”. Further to the same decision, the Council conducted a substantive review on the implementation of the decision, including the progress made for the destruction of ACWs referred to in operative paragraph 8, which is reflected in the attachment to the Report of the Executive Council on the Performance of its Activities in the Period from 16 July 2011 to 13 July 2012. The national papers by China and Japan were circulated to the members of the Council.
4. The Council concurred with the recommendation of the Vice-Chairperson and coordinator for chemical industry and other Article VI issues that the issue of “Understanding on access to records during Schedule 2, Schedule 3, and DOC/PSF plant-site inspections” be considered closed and requiring no further action. The Council forwarded this recommendation to the Conference for consideration.
5. The Council adopted a decision recommending that the Conference consider the issue of “guidelines for the number, intensity, duration, timing, and mode of inspections at Schedule 1 single small-scale facilities and at other Schedule 1 facilities” as closed and requiring no further consideration. The draft decision to this effect has been submitted to the Conference accordingly.
6. Further to a decision by the Conference at its Fourteenth Session regarding the implementation of Article VII obligations (C-14/DEC.12, dated 4 December 2009), the Council noted three reports by the Director-General on the “Status of Implementation of Article VII as at 27 July 2012. The Council forwarded them to the Conference for consideration.
7. The Council considered and noted a report by the Director-General entitled “Progress Report on and the Status of Implementation of Article XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention for the Period 1 January to 15 August 2012”. It has been submitted to the Conference for its consideration.
8. The Council considered and noted the annual report on the implementation of the action plan for the universality of the Convention during the period from 16 September 2011 to 15 August 2012, which had been submitted to both the Council and the Conference.

9. The Council considered the Draft Programme and Budget for 2013, and forwarded it to the Conference, together with its comments and recommendations. The Medium-Term Plan for the period from 2013 to 2015 has been circulated to the Member States along with the Draft Programme and Budget for 2013.
10. The Council noted the Financial Statements of the OPCW and the report of the External Auditor for the year ending 31 December 2011 and forwarded them to the Conference for consideration.
11. The Council also considered and forwarded to the Conference a report by the Director-General on OPCW income and expenditure for the financial year to 30 June 2012 as well as a Note by the Director-General on the cash situation and the use of the Working Capital Fund for the financial year to 31 August 2012.
12. Further to a decision of the Conference at its Eleventh Session (C-11/DEC.5, dated 7 December 2006), the Council considered and forwarded to the Conference a Note by the Director-General on the status of implementation by States Parties of agreed multi-year payment plans.
13. The Council considered a Note by the Director-General on proposed amendments to the Financial Regulations and Rules of the OPCW and recommended the Conference to consider and approve the proposals contained therein. A draft decision has been submitted to the Conference to this effect.
14. The Council considered a Note by the Director-General on the proposed amendment to the Staff Regulations of the OPCW, adopted a decision on this matter and forwarded it to the Conference for consideration. The Council emphasised that downward classification of posts will be undertaken without adverse effect on the programme delivery of the operational Divisions (Verification, Inspectorate, and International Cooperation and Assistance) of the Secretariat. The Council encouraged the Director General to submit proposals for all upward classifications simultaneously with release of the Draft Programme and Budget.
15. The Council considered and noted a Note on the Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa on the Chemical Weapons Convention, which has been also submitted to the Conference for consideration.
16. The Council considered and noted a report by the Host Country Committee on the performance of its activities from February to August 2012, and submitted it to the Conference for consideration. The Council encouraged the Host country and concerned delegations to continue their consultations with a view to finalising solutions on outstanding issues and called upon the Host Country Committee to report back to the Council at its next Session.
17. In accordance with the prior approval of the Conference, this year, the Council concluded agreements on privileges and immunities with Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mozambique, Paraguay and Thailand. The Council also approved amendments to the agreement with Bulgaria.

This concludes my summary of the activities of the Council after the cut-off date of the Report which is before the Conference. It was a remarkably successful Session which was able to arrive at consensus on all issues including the Organisation's Programme and Budget for 2013. If the discussions were sometimes prolonged, it only demonstrated the interest of Council members to arrive at the best minimum common denominator of agreement. The spirit of consensus once again prevailed. I would like to express my gratitude to all members of the Council for their cooperation and commitment to the full implementation of the Convention.

May I briefly refer now to the Chairperson's consultations on the issues relating to improvement of the methodology of the work of the Council. As you recall, the work on this subject was initiated pursuant to the request by EC-67 to informally consult with all delegations and the Secretariat on this issue. After the first meeting chaired by my predecessor, EC-68 requested the Chairperson to continue the informal consultations. I conducted informal consultations on 29 August and submitted a summary of issues raised during the informal consultations to the Seventieth Session of the Council. The Council expressed appreciation for the progress achieved on this matter and the general desire to move forward on some recommendations. The Council also noted that other recommendations would require further discussion by the Council, as appropriate. The Council requested the Chairperson to continue consultations intersessionally on issues relating to improvement of the methodology of the work of the Council. It is my intention to continue my work on this matter in accordance with the request.

As I said earlier, I would like to place on record the excellent support, leadership and contribution made by the Vice-Chairpersons in the Council under their respective clusters of issues, namely: Ambassador Miguel Eduardo Calahorrano Camino of Ecuador on chemical weapons issues; Ambassador Robert Mikulak of the United States of America on chemical industry and other Article VI issues; Ambassador Sirajuddin Hamid Yousif of Sudan on administrative and financial issues; and Ambassador Roman Kolodkin of the Russian Federation on legal, organisational, and other issues.

Each Vice-Chair in his own unique way contributed to the successful outcome of the deliberations of the Council. May I particularly thank my colleague Ambassador of Sudan for the outstanding manner by which he, along with two other facilitators from France and Kenya respectively, led the consultations on the budget issue.

I should also like to separately commend all facilitators of the Council for their tireless efforts in leading consultations on the outstanding issues. Thanks to their dedicated work, some of the outstanding issues have been successfully concluded while others are in the process of being concluded.

Finally, I wish to pay personal tribute to the consistent support and technical advice discreetly given whenever the occasion demanded by our Director-General and members of his dedicated staff. Their tireless efforts enabled the Council to conduct its work so effectively and in a timely manner.

Thank you very much for your attention, and I wish the Conference a successful Seventeenth Session.