



**Statement by
Ambassador Rajesh N. Prasad
Permanent Representative of India to the OPCW and
Leader of the Indian Delegation
to the 18th Session of the Conference of States Parties
December 2-6, 2013**

Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Director General,
Distinguished Delegates,

First of all, on behalf of my delegation, I should very much like to offer warm felicitations to the distinguished Ambassador of Iraq on assuming the Chair of the 18th Session of the Conference of States Parties. My delegation is confident, Mr. Chairman, that with you at the helm, the deliberations of this Conference will be ably steered. We would also like to congratulate the newly elected Bureau Members and other officers.

2. May I also take this opportunity to convey my delegation's deep appreciation for the outstanding work done by the distinguished Ambassador of South Africa as the Chair of the 17th Session of the Conference of States Parties.

3. Soon after the conclusion of this Conference, on 10 December, the OPCW would be awarded the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize. This prestigious award bestows international recognition on the OPCW for the excellent work it has done since 1997. We remain hopeful that this award will go a long way in creating mass awareness about global and verifiable disarmament of all weapons of mass destruction, in general, and the CW Convention, in particular, across the world. I should like to take this opportunity to commend the role of the Director General and the Technical Secretariat for the efforts they have made in the implementation of the Convention and for advancing the common goal of a world free of chemical weapons. My delegation also fully supports the nomination of Ambassador Üzümcü for a second term as the Director General.

Mr. Chairman,

4. My delegation endorses and associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of NAM and China.

5. India warmly welcomes Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic as States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. We also encourage those States that are not Parties to the Convention to consider ratifying or acceding to the Convention at the earliest. Further, we also encourage those States Parties who have not set up National Authorities to take suitable measures in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

6. India has consistently supported the complete destruction and elimination of chemical weapons worldwide. Pending their complete elimination, it is vitally important to ensure safe and secure custody of chemical weapons stockpiles and prevent their access to terrorists and

other non-State actors. India is of the firm view that the international legal norm against the use of chemical weapons anywhere and by anyone must not be breached. India welcomes the progress made on the time-bound safeguarding and destruction of Syria's chemical weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

7. I am happy to announce the decision of the Government of India to offer a financial contribution of US\$ one million to the Trust Fund set up at the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) at the Hague for use in the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons and related facilities. India would also offer the services of its experts to be used by the OPCW in the destruction verification activity as well as training slots for the personnel participating in the UN-OPCW Mission for the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. India's assistance to the OPCW is a concrete demonstration of India's consistent position of support for the complete destruction and elimination of chemical weapons worldwide.

8. My delegation hopes that recent developments, including the award of the Nobel to the OPCW, would also spur efforts by the two largest possessors to complete the destruction of their remaining stockpiles of chemical weapons so that the disarmament promise of the CWC can be realized fully.

Mr. Chairman,

9. This Conference is being held at a critical juncture. The OPCW is currently involved in the not so easy task of meeting the timelines set for the elimination and destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles in the Syrian Arab Republic. In this connection, we appreciate the cooperation extended so far by the Syrian Arab Republic and we remain hopeful that the Syrian authorities would continue to extend their full support and cooperation to the ongoing efforts to ensure the complete destruction of its chemical weapons stockpiles.

10. Mr. Chairman, my delegation also appreciates the efforts of the OPCW to set up the Operational Planning Group which has been established to outline the Plan for the removal and destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. I take this opportunity to commend the efforts of the Special Coordinator for OPCW – UN Joint Mission in Syria and the team of OPCW Inspectors who are contributing to ensure timely verification and destruction of chemical weapons in Syria.

Mr. Chairman,

11. We have taken note of the DG's report giving an overview of the legislative and administrative measures adopted by the State Parties to implement their obligations under Article VII in the 74th EC. Effective national implementation is critical to the accomplishment of the objectives and purposes of the Convention. Main components of national implementation are enactment of comprehensive domestic legislation, timely completion of destruction within the deadlines prescribed in the CWC, submission of necessary declarations, facilitating inspections by the OPCW and taking all administrative steps necessary to implement the domestic legislations effectively. A template for a National Implementation Index (NII) has been formulated by our National Authority, by initially taking India as an example. The NII will capture how effectively a State Party has implemented its National Implementation obligations. We believe that we need to intensify and prioritise efforts on national implementation before considering any increase in the number of Article VI inspections or other such measures. We also appreciate the efforts of the Facilitator for

Article VII, our colleague from Bulgaria for his efficient handling of the issues relating to Article VII and carrying forward the consultations among the States Parties.

Mr. Chairman,

12. India supports universality of the CWC. We appreciate the efforts taken by TS for encouraging non-state parties to join the Convention. Since these efforts are quite expensive, we feel that the budget for external relations should be more results based.

Mr. Chairman,

13. The Convention attempts to strike a balance between free trade in chemicals and the undertaking given by States Parties not to engage in any activity prohibited under the Convention. Therefore, exports and imports of certain chemicals are subject to notification or declarations. It is observed that discrepancies arise when there is a mismatch between declarations of contracting countries. A complicating factor is that a trade discrepancy cannot be controlled entirely by one country. Every State Party has to take part actively in the reconciliation process.

14. Together with the goal of eliminating chemical weapons, the CWC also makes economic and technological development through international cooperation in the field of peaceful chemical activities as one of the four core objectives of the Convention. We continue to believe therefore that development of a well-defined Action Plan with monitorable indicators is essential for the full implementation of Article XI. This being one of the important pillars of the Convention, we also believe that there should be steady increase in budgetary allocations from the regular programme and budget for its implementation. We would also like to wish our colleague from Pakistan all success as the new facilitator for Article XI.

Mr. Chairman,

15. In so far as selection of a chemical facility for inspection is concerned, my delegation believes that the random method ensures fairness and rigour in the process. This should not be tinkered with lightly. It is also our view that the sequential inspection methodology violates the random selection method.

16. An important agenda item before us relates to the Budget and Programme of the Organisation for 2014. It is a matter of some satisfaction that the Executive Council Meeting held recently was able to achieve consensus on it. An important element of the Budget is the costs related to the verification activities in Syria as per the decision of the 33rd Meeting of the Executive Council dated 27 September 2013. While the OPCW Budget for 2014 is an improvement over the previous ones, there is still scope for refinement in definitions, prioritizing of objectives, measurement of performance etc. to achieve the objectives of the Convention in a better way.

Mr. Chairman,

17. India attaches importance to the OPCW Scientific Advisory Board. There is an urgent need for an institutional arrangement which should examine the recommendations of SAB so as to ensure that SAB recommendations are taken into consideration more meaningfully and in a more structured manner by the Executive Council and the Conference of States Parties. We are of the view that SAB report should not be binding unless it is approved by consensus by CSP.

18. In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would request that this Statement be circulated as an official document of the Conference.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
