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THAILAND

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR VIRACHAI PLASAI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND
TO THE OPCW AT THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE
OF THE STATES PARTIES**

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

1. First of all, let me join other delegations in congratulating you, your Excellency Ambassador Dr. Sa'ad Abdul Majeed Ibrahim Al-Ali of Iraq, for your election as Chairman of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the State Parties. I am confident that under your wise guidance, this session will yield a successful and beneficial outcome. I also wish to extend my delegation's appreciation to the outgoing Chairman, Ambassador Peter Goosen of South Africa, for his able chairmanship and for the substantial progress achieved during the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.
2. I take this opportunity to congratulate H.E. Director-General Ahmet Üzümcü for the exceptional achievements of the OPCW during the past four years. His tireless efforts and exemplary leadership have greatly contributed to the wide recognition that the Organisation now enjoys in its prominent role in the field of disarmament. This indeed culminated in the OPCW being awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize. The OPCW, its Director-General, and its staff deserve this great honour for their dedication to achieving the object and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and most particularly, for their commitment to the elimination of chemical weapons under the most challenging and sometimes dangerous situations. In this spirit, it is with great pleasure that I hereby express my delegation's support for H.E. Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü's appointment as Director-General of this Organisation for a second term. My delegation also pledges full support to the Director-General and the OPCW for the challenging tasks ahead.
3. My delegation wishes to reiterate the Kingdom of Thailand's unequivocal position calling for a complete elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction, which pose a grave threat to humanity and to international peace and security. For this reason, Thailand remains fully committed to the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We believe that the complete and timely elimination of chemical



weapons must remain the top priority of the OPCW. Thailand hopes that the Member States and the Organisation will continue to work together constructively to achieve this fundamental objective of the Convention.

4. Thailand also believes that international peace and security can be better maintained and enhanced through the universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention. In this regard, we welcome the accession of the Republic of Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic to the Convention, and call on the remaining States not Party to the Convention to consider ratifying or acceding to it without delay.
5. For the Kingdom of Thailand, the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic on 21 August of this year, as reported by the United Nations investigation team, is totally unacceptable. It is contrary to the accepted international norms and standards, as well as well-established humanitarian principles. Thailand therefore commends the OPCW and the United Nations for their ongoing joint efforts in the verification and destruction of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic amid a situation that can have serious implications for the safety and security of the personnel involved. We also welcome the decisions of the Executive Council at its Thirty-Third and Thirty-Fourth Meetings on the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, and note with great interest the progress achieved so far in the implementation of these decisions. In particular, we appreciate the full cooperation extended by the Syrian Arab Republic to the OPCW for the total elimination of chemical weapons and facilities in the country, and encourage it to continue to do so. We wish to see the process for such elimination be carried out under strict verification measures in a transparent, verifiable and secure manner.
6. Thailand welcomes the contributions made by a number of States Parties to the trust funds established for the verification and destruction missions in implementation of the aforementioned Executive Council decisions. For its part, Thailand is seriously considering making voluntary contributions to the funds in the near future, considering the seriousness of the threat to international peace and stability posed by the current situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.
7. The Third Review Conference, which was held in April of this year, came to a highly successful conclusion. We note with satisfaction the Conference's final document, which confirms the political support of the States Parties to the "unequivocal commitment" to globally ban chemical weapons. The document also provides a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Convention in the past five years, and outlines the priorities of the OPCW for the next five years. This is a remarkable achievement, and my delegation, along with others, will render full support to the efforts to implement it in the years to come.
8. Next, I wish to draw your attention to another important issue, which should have high priority on the agenda of the States Parties, that of the promotion of technical cooperation among their National Authorities. In particular, we believe that the National Authorities of the Member States can and should do more to share data on imports and exports of scheduled chemicals. Networking among them should be encouraged to enable them to monitor and control movement of scheduled chemicals more effectively. Such information sharing will allow the National Authorities to identify and avoid any discrepancy between the quantities of scheduled chemicals

declared by importing and exporting States Parties. This will certainly contribute to a more effective functioning of the Convention.

9. Thailand also believes that there is a need to further enhance the OPCW's role in capacity building and technical assistance, which should continue to be a high priority for the Organisation in the near future. In particular, we urge more cooperation in the field of chemical activities, including exchange of information on chemicals, equipment, and related scientific and technical data. In this regard, we commend the OPCW's efforts in organising capacity-building activities under its international cooperation programmes, which have proved to be of great benefit to many States Parties, especially those with developing economies.

Mr Chairperson,

10. The tragic incident that took place in the Syrian Arab Republic this year is perhaps the most important challenge yet for the OPCW in its 16 years of existence. It reminds us that the Organisation, the States Parties, and the international community as a whole must work closely together to prevent any reoccurrence of such incidents. While we welcome the fact that there has been substantial progress towards achieving a "global zero", we believe that this is not time to "lower our guard". On the contrary, the incident only convinces us more that we must redouble our efforts to ensure that the next generations will live and prosper in a world free of chemical weapons and, for that matter, any other kind of weapons of mass destruction.
11. To conclude, Mr Chairperson, I wish to state that the Kingdom of Thailand fully supports the positions expressed in the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement States Parties and China. I also wish to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

Thank you.

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