

Statement by Dr Rajiv Nayan, the Institute for Defence
Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, India

Madam Chair, Director-General, Excellencies, Ladies
and Gentlemen,

The nineteenth session of the Conference of States Parties is meeting to take stock of the working of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Chemical Weapons Convention-- a disarmament treaty of one of the three classes of Weapons of Mass Destruction—has promises for international security, global peace and prosperity if it is implemented fully. From its very inception, it has been considered a model treaty for disarmament because of its unique provisions.

Over the years, 190 countries joined the Convention representing 98 percent of the world population. Yet the treaty is not universal in nature. Some important countries have not joined the Convention and a couple of signatory countries are holding their ratification.

The Chemical Weapons Convention's mandate for complete destruction of chemical arsenals has made impressive progress. On destruction of declared chemical arsenals and facilities, the OPCW records: "84.95% of the world's declared stockpile of 72,524 metric tonnes of chemical agent has been destroyed." This also means around/over 15 percent of declared stockpiles still exist and some possessor states have

missed even the extended deadline for complete destruction.

A country like India had completed the destruction of its declared stockpile before its deadline. A couple of other countries have also met their stockpile destruction timelines. However, a few countries are still struggling. The international community and the international organisations must encourage these countries to destroy their chemical arsenals. This is necessary for the credibility of the Convention and international law.

The Syrian chemical stockpile has been one of the challenges for chemical disarmament. Syria has acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention. The member countries need to assist OPCW efforts to complete the safe destruction of Syria's chemical weapons and related facilities in the next few months. Countries should contribute to the Trust Fund set up at the Organisation. The destruction process also needs expertise. Human resources from the member countries may smoothen and expedite the destruction process.

In recent years, the international community is worried about chemical arsenals falling into wrong hands. The governmental and non-governmental initiatives for chemical safety and security may address this challenge emanating not only from the Syrian stockpile but also chemical agents existing elsewhere, which are not secure.

The member countries should support outreach activities of the OPCW as well as take up national and regional activities for chemical safety and security. Gradually, NGOs are also becoming active with the OPCW for full implementation of the Convention. NGOs may work with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 Committee's outreach programmes as well.

The next phase should be international cooperation. However, new scientific and technological developments combined with the increased intensity of the global chemical commerce may raise further challenges for the Convention. The OPCW and member countries may have to be on alert. The verification architecture of the Convention needs to be continually strengthened.

The OPCW, the member countries and the civil society have to work together to make the Chemical Weapons Convention a sustainable success. This success will truly make the Convention a model treaty for other classes of weapons of mass destruction.

Thank you for your kind attention, and I ask that these remarks be included in the CSP official record.