



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Nineteenth Session
1 – 5 December 2014

C-19/NAT.23
1 December 2014
ARABIC and ENGLISH only

IRAQ

**STATEMENT BY MR MOUHAMMAD AL-DORAKY
DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ AT THE
NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Madam Chairperson,
Excellency, the Director-General of the OPCW,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset I should like to welcome you Excellency, Ambassador Vesela Mrđen Korać of Croatia, and congratulate you on your election as Chairperson of the Nineteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We are confident that your diplomatic expertise and knowledge will be key in ensuring the success of this Conference. I wish also to thank the Director-General, H.E. Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, for the informative and comprehensive report he submitted to this session. We appreciate his efforts and those of his team in the Technical Secretariat to promote the role of the OPCW, and their excellent contribution to the implementation of the provisions of the Convention. I avail myself of this opportunity to thank all States Parties for their fruitful cooperation during the previous session of the Conference of the States Parties under the chairmanship of Iraq.

The delegation of my country aligns itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Mr Alireza Jahangiri, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and China. I also thank him for his work during the past three years during which the Islamic Republic of Iran acted as Chair of the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and China. It would be remiss of me if I did not also welcome his successor, the Ambassador of the Republic of Venezuela. I reiterate our support for the decisions made by the Group.

The delegation of my country stresses the importance of completing the destruction of chemical weapons and confirms my Government's full commitment to all treaties and conventions on disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in line with the provisions of the Iraqi constitution that prohibits the possession, transfer, use and stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction and the materials used for their manufacture. On that basis, in implementation of Iraq's obligations, Iraqi authorities have started developing a destruction plan for the remnants of the former regime's chemical programme, and undertaken to build facilities for the disposal of these remnants stored in bunkers 13 and 41 at the Al-Muthanna site, in cooperation with a number of friendly States that have provided the Iraqi authorities with technical assistance. However, during the past few months, vicious terrorist attacks targeting many of the regions and institutions in Iraq have



prevented us from starting the destruction operation, which was scheduled to commence at the end of 2014.

Recently, the Iraqi Army launched a military operation which allowed it to recover and clear completely the Al-Muthanna site and the roads leading to it. Also, engineers have started to clear improvised explosive devices and other explosives at the site and the surrounding areas. These operations are still ongoing. A technical team of experts is still conducting a technical evaluation of damages to the facility, the destruction system and the associated infrastructure. Once the evaluation is completed, Iraq will submit a technical report thereon to the OPCW. I need to state clearly that only the destruction facilities were ransacked and looted and that terrorists were not able to penetrate the fortified bunkers. In this respect, we wish to confirm that the Iraqi Government is determined, once the site has been completely secured and the infrastructure and related facilities rebuilt and in coordination with the relevant technical authorities, to start operating the destruction facilities to implement its obligations under the provisions of Article I, paragraph 2, of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Also, during the past period, terrorist groups used limited amounts of chlorine gas in the region of Al-Dhuluyia, in order to spread fear among citizens and sap the morale of security personnel. This attack did not result in any victims, apart from a few people who experienced mild symptoms and were treated onsite. Some media amplified this incident in their reports. The Iraqi Government condemns in the strongest terms the use by terrorist groups or by anyone, of chemicals or dual-use materials to harm people and the environment.

The delegation of my country welcomes the Executive Council decisions on the elimination and destruction of Syrian chemical weapons. We value the role played by the OPCW in this endeavour as well as the cooperation extended by the Syrian Arab Republic in the implementation of the relevant decisions of the Executive Council, for the elimination of chemical weapons. We look forward to completing the destruction of Syrian production chemical weapons facilities and the implementation of relevant decisions.

Iraqi authorities continue acting diligently to enhance and enforce national legislation and regulations aimed at strengthening security and safety of all nuclear, chemical biological and radiological activities, and related to its accession to many relevant international conventions and treaties.

The delegation of my country avails itself of this opportunity to thank the National Authority of the Republic of India for its cooperation and for hosting representatives of Iraqi Monitoring Authority in September last.

One year ago, the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the OPCW in recognition of its efforts to implement its mandate under the Convention. In this respect, we welcome the Director-General's initiative to establish the OPCW-The Hague Annual Award as a follow-up to the Nobel Peace Prize. We congratulate this year's awardees.

The importance of the universality of the Convention becomes all the more clear to us in the light of recent events in our region. In this regard, the delegation of my country values the efforts put in by the Technical Secretariat and the Director-General of the OPCW who has mobilised all resources, including through the United Nations and its Secretary-General, to encourage States not party to the Convention to accede thereto. We subscribe to his approach to accomplish this objective. We also call upon all Member States to contribute to efforts

made by the Director-General to urge States not Party to the Convention to accede thereto without delay or preconditions.

The delegation of my country highly values the Technical Secretariat's endeavours to implement the provisions of the Convention and the Matrix of Actionable Items recommended by the Third Review Conference. It is important to implement Article X of the Convention and we call for strengthening the activities of the OPCW for its implementation, given the extraordinary circumstances in our region, which may require an important contribution from the OPCW. I should not omit to mention the importance of the implementation of Articles VI, VII and XI of the Convention.

The Government of the Republic of Iraq emphasises its full compliance with all treaties and conventions on disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in line with the provisions of the Iraqi Constitution that prohibit the possession, transfer, use and stockpiling of such weapons and the materials used for their manufacture. Our Government also underscores its commitment to cooperating with the OPCW Technical Secretariat and Member States to realise the objectives of the Convention, namely to strive for a world free of chemical weapons and, indeed, of all weapons of mass destruction, with a view to achieving international peace and security. The Government of my country strongly wanted to have a Halabja monument erected at the OPCW headquarters, which was done on 29 April of this year, as a memorial proclaiming its abhorrence and condemnation of the use of chemical weapons against innocent citizens.

Finally, I should like that this statement be adopted as an official document of the Nineteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

I thank you.

--- 0 ---