



NATIONAL STATEMENT OF INDIA
BY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA TO OPCW
H.E. MRS. REENAT SANDHU
AT THE 105TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
5 – 8 March 2024

Chairperson,
Director-General &
Distinguished delegates

1. The Indian delegation thanks His Excellency Lucian Fătu, Ambassador of Romania, for his chairmanship of the 105th session of the Executive Council. We look forward to having a very fruitful and productive session under your able leadership.
2. We would also like to extend our appreciation to the Technical Secretariat, led by Director-General Fernando Arias for their commitment towards supporting the effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.
3. India attaches great importance to the full, effective, and non-discriminatory implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. As an original signatory, we support all efforts to achieve its universality and urge the States that are not Parties, to join the Convention at the earliest.
4. The destruction of all declared stockpiles of chemical weapons last year was an important milestone in the history of the OPCW. It is now incumbent upon us to remain vigilant and collectively strive to prevent any re-emergence of chemical weapons. Universal adherence to the Convention should, therefore, remain of utmost priority for the OPCW.
5. India is of the view that full and effective national implementation of the Convention by States Parties is important to address emerging challenges such as the discovery of new toxic chemicals, technological advancements in the deployment of chemical weapons and threats posed by non-State actors. The table top exercise on countering chemical terrorism held in November last year highlighted the importance

of implementing laws, enhancing capabilities and improving preparedness. India is partnering with Kenya under the OPCW's mentorship programme to share our experience in national implementation. We are ready to extend similar mentorship support to other interested States Parties as well, with a view to securing the global supply chains of chemicals.

6. India believes that as a confidence-building measure, Article VI inspections should continue to be implemented in a manner which does not hamper the economic and technological development of States Parties. However, we need to adapt the verification and inspection regime, in light of the growing chemical industry and rapid advancements in science and technology. India has been engaging pro-actively towards achieving this goal.

7. India remains firmly opposed to any use or threat of use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anybody and under any circumstances. We reiterate the need for an impartial and objective investigation into any use of chemical weapons by the OPCW to establish the facts and reach evidence-based conclusions. However, this should be done strictly as per the provisions of the Convention, while respecting the delicate balance of power and responsibilities enshrined under it.

8. India has consistently encouraged engagement between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Technical Secretariat to resolve all outstanding issues. We welcome the 26th round of consultations between the Technical Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic and hope that both sides will continue to maintain this constructive approach in their efforts.

9. India supports peaceful uses of chemical technology and the enhancement of International Cooperation in the field of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention. We believe that international cooperation activities under the OPCW can play a crucial role in enhancing the capabilities of States Parties to fully implement the Convention. Since 2018, the Indian Institute of Chemical Technology has been conducting Analytical Skills Development Courses in collaboration with the Technical Secretariat, which have benefited several States Parties.

10. The establishment of the ChemTech Centre is an important step towards enhancing OPCW's research, analytical and capacity-building capabilities. It also provides an excellent opportunity for knowledge sharing and scientific & technological collaboration with a wide network of stakeholders, including research institutions, academia, government authorities and chemical industry. India would be happy to partner in this effort and contribute to the ChemTech Centre's activities.

11. We are pleased to note that further to the decision at the CSP, the Technical Secretariat has developed specific deliverables for implementation of the Action Plan

on Geographical Representation, including a strategic framework, an implementation programme and a monitoring mechanism. We look forward to early implementation of the Action Plan.

12. Before I conclude, let me reiterate the importance of consensus building in the functioning of the OPCW and the need for all States Parties to work together for a world free of chemical weapons and take all decisions in a spirit of cooperation. My delegation would also emphasize the importance of due consultations and ensuring that views of all member states are taken on board on all issues impacting the present and future work of the OPCW.

13. I request that this statement be considered an official document of this session and posted on the external server and the public website.

Thank you.