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Chemical Weapons

By

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In the Name of God

The Most Gracious and the Most Merciful

Mr. Chairman, distinguished colleagues,

At the outset I am obliged to appreciate the invitation and to congratulate Pugwash for excellent organization the conference and extend to sincere thanks to the host country, our brotherly neighbor, Turkey.

Mr. Chairman.

Speaking in my own personal capacity as is the practice in the Pugwash, permit me to start by reminding that Iran is the main contemporary victim of chemical weapons, with 100 thousands casualties, 38 000 being treated, over lost their lives since the brutal chemical attack by Saddam regime. Their voices were not heard by the international community, no effective emergency humanitarian and medical assistance were given, and the worst was the fact that no condemnation of Saddam regime was made by UN and other international organizations..

Based on the principles enshrined in the constitution and the religious commitments, which considers the use of weapons of mass destruction forbidden, the Islamic Republic of Iran did not retaliate.

A short glance on the past history shows the horrors witnessed during the World War I, when over 1.3 million people became casualties of chemical weapons. The Geneva Protocol 1925 was then agreed upon. Regretfully some countries have put reservations on it, keeping the right to use

chemical and other toxic agents prohibited in the Protocol. Iran has not put any reservation. Experiencing the tragedy as the result of the use of chemical weapons, Iran was among the most active participants during the negotiations and among the first countries signing and ratifying the Chemical Weapons Conventions (CWC).

I have to emphasize that any country joining the treaties on disarmament, such as NPT, CWC and BWC is compromising its national security for the sake of global security. The degree of compromise depends on many factors including the peculiarity of the region it locates and the relation with other countries. Therefore the longer it takes the others specifically countries of its concern to join the treaty and the realization of universality of the treaty, that state party is paying heavier security price. This is applied to the case of Iran being party to all WMD treaties where it faces continuous security threat by Israeli regime, not part to the NPT, CWC and BWC.

Focusing on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), one could judge that it lacks deficiencies of other similar treaties such as NPT, which is discriminatory by categorizing parties into nuclear weapon states (NWS) and non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS) party to the NPT. One could fairly judge that except couple of serious diversions from the spirit and letter of the convention, which I will elaborate in this paper, the OPCW has satisfactory record of implementing CWC. I deem it appropriate to congratulate the Member States and the Secretariat, specially the Director General for the recent Nobel Peace Award.

According to the convention the possessors of chemical weapons joining prior to 2007, had a strict legal obligation to destroy their chemical weapons not later than 10 years after entering into force. In exceptional circumstances, upon the approval of the General Conference the timeline could be extended another 5 years. It is a matter of serious disappointment that after 15 years the chemical stocks of the United States and Russia have not been totally destroyed and contrary to the convention the clear time line has been totally ignored and the time for destruction is indefinitely extended. Needless to say that Russia have from the beginning asked for financial assistance in order to be able to fulfill their obligation in timely manner but the promises by some western countries were not realized. The serious concern for the strong proponents of the CWC that once a chapter of derailing from provisions of the CWC under the pretext of exception to the rule, due to political pressures, is opened, the taboo is broken, a precedent is created, thus the integrity and the credibility of the Treaty is in jeopardy.

Mr. Chairman,

Welcoming the Government of Syria deciding to join the CWC, appreciating the activities of the Secretariat of the OPCW specifically the professionalism of inspectors conducting verification in Syria, one has to be vigilant that the provisions of the decision of the Executive Council to be consistent with the provisions of the Treaty. A critical review of the decision EC-33 of 27 September 2013 shows number of inconsistencies. Some consider the resolution of the UNSC after the decision of the Executive Council of the OPCW following the accession of Syria being fully obliged to implement its obligation as a state party to the CWC was necessary. The OPCW has to be able to conduct independently in accordance with the CWC.

I have to refer to another case of non-compliance with the CWC. After six years from the invasion of Iraq by US and UK and their allies, they informed the discovery of chemical weapons and the destruction. This is clear non-compliance with their obligations under the Convention including submission of the destruction plan for the approval of the Executive Council, as envisaged in Article III and Verification Annex.

WE got to be careful not to let the CWC become a Swiss cheese after making holes in it under the pretext of special cases!

The adherence of Syria to the CWC has paved the way for the realization of the Middle East Zone Free from WMDs, which has always been supported by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the other concerns is the lack of full implementation of Article X and XI of the Convention after 15 years. Permit me to recall the position of the NAM and China as reflected in the OPCW document C-17/NAT.23:

- **Taking into account the need of the proper balance of the pillars of the Convention**
- **Emphasizing full effective, and non-discriminatory implementer implementation of Article XI, through action plan**
- **Recalling the obligation of States Parties to implement the Convention in a manner that avoids hampering the economic or technological development of other states parties,**
- **The necessity of removal of and avoiding the imposition of any restrictions, in particular unilateral sanctions against other states parties on transferring and exchanging information, technology, material and equipment for peaceful purposes in chemical field, that are contrary to the Convention,**
- **Any concept or approach related to the implementation of other provisions of the Convention shall not undermine provisions of Article XI.**

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Colleagues,

In order to keep the memories of the victims of the chemical weapons, the Executive Council decided in its 62nd Session in 2010 to designate 28 June as a day of remembrance of Sardasht, the city bombarded by chemical weapons during the imposed war by Saddam.

Designation of 29 April as Remembrance Day of all Victims of chemical warfare is also a remarkable attempt by the OPCW.

On 26th November 2012, on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention and establishment of the OPCW, a “Monument of Chemical Weapons Victims” dedicated by the Islamic Republic of Iran to the OPCW was unveiled by the Deputy for International Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Director General of the OPCW. The Monument was created in memory of all chemical weapons victims around the world, whether those passed away or are still suffering of the effects of using these barbaric weapons. Close collaboration between NGOs of Japan and Iran keeping memories of victims of nuclear and chemical weapons through arrangements including several

visits by citizens of both countries to Hiroshima& Nagasaki and Sardasht is a unique example towards the Nobel goal.

Locating such monuments for remembrance of nuclear and chemical weapons in capitals cities all over world shall certainly have impacts on public awareness and thus on prevention of reoccurrence of such inhumane events.

Pursuant to the proposal by the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Executive Council decided on 2 December 2011 to establish the international support network for victims of chemical weapons and a voluntary trust fund for this purpose.

Undoubtedly such measures has promoted the status of the OPCW caring about the humanitarian consequences of the use of such inhume warfare, for which Member States as well as the Director General have to be commended for.

Wishing for world free from all types of weapons of mass destruction

Thanks for Your attention