

INDIA
STATEMENT BY H.E. KUMAR TUHIN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA TO THE
OPCW
AT THE 29th SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES
(25 – 29 November 2024)

Chairperson,
Director-General &
Distinguished delegates,

The Indian delegation welcomes H.E. Almir Šahović, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Kingdom of the Netherlands as the Chair of the 29th session of the Conference of States Parties (CSP). We assure you of our full cooperation and support for the successful conclusion of the 29th session of the CSP. We look forward to having a very fruitful and productive session under your able leadership. We thank the outgoing Chair, H.E. Suljuk Mustansar Tarar, Ambassador of Pakistan for all his efforts.

2. We would like to extend our appreciation to the Technical Secretariat, led by Director-General Fernando Arias, for its commitment towards supporting the effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Mr. Chair,

3. The destruction of all declared stockpiles of chemical weapons 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 an utmost priority for the OPCW.

4. India emphasizes the vital importance of 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.

5. India is of the view that full and effective national implementation of the Convention by the States Parties, in line with Article VII of the Convention 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.

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. India has been engaging pro-actively towards achieving this goal, including in the ongoing discussions between States Parties and the Technical Secretariat through the Industry Cluster with the aim to reduce the current backlog of Schedule 2 inspections. In light of the growing chemical industry and rapid advancements in science and technology, the methodology under discussion regarding Schedule 2 plant site risk assessment and reinspection frequencies may only be reviewed in line with the Convention and with the consensus of States Parties.

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 28th round of consultations between the Technical Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic with the full participation of the Declaration Assessment Team and hope that both sides will continue to maintain a constructive approach in their efforts.

9. India believes that international cooperation activities under the OPCW can play a crucial role in enhancing the capabilities of States Parties to fully implement the Convention. India stands ready to support all efforts to promote the peaceful uses of chemical technology and enhance international cooperation in this field. For the past 6 years, India has been successfully hosting OPCW's Analytical Skills Development Course (ASDC) at the CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology, Hyderabad (IICT), which has benefited 142 participants so far. The latest programme was in

September 2024 wherein 20 participants from 20 countries from the Asia and Africa regions participated. We are glad that OPCW selected Institute of Pesticides Formulation Technology, Gurugram, another premier Indian institute to be a partner for ASDC course for the 2025-'27 period.

Mr. Chair,

10. My delegation is happy to inform this Conference that under the OPCW Mentorship/Partnership Program, the Indian and Kenyan National Authorities closely cooperated during 2024 to further the desired outcomes under the Convention. As part of the programme, Kenya's National Authority visited India in September 2024, and discussed sharing of best practices in national implementation legislation, national implementation plan, strengthening laboratory capacity, enhancing strategic coordination and effective knowledge management. The outcomes were presented at the recently concluded 26th Annual Meeting of National Authorities, jointly by both Indian and Kenyan officials. We are ready to extend similar cooperation programmes to other interested States Parties.

11. The ChemTech Centre is emerging as an important capacity building centre for the effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. 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.

12. On the important task of adopting the Draft Revised Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2025 at the programme and subprogramme level which this CSP has to approve, we would like to emphasize on the need for ensuring adequate funding for the organization to carry out the essential tasks under the convention. At the same-time, this has to be done in the backdrop of effects of global inflation, on the need to ensure adequate funding for ICA programme, as well as encouraging the TS to continue striving to enhance efficiencies in the administration and management of the organization.

Mr. Chair,

13. India reiterates the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible, and improve geographical representation and gender balance within the composition of the Technical Secretariat. Ensuring equitable geographical representation in TS is crucial to maintain a universal character that the Convention envisions. We hope that this remains central to any efforts at modifying OPCW's tenure policies.

Mr. Chair,

14. India takes note of the focus of the Technical Secretariat on the role of AI in advancing the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. India actively participated in the Conference held in Morocco in October 2024. Our delegation believes that there is a need for a holistic approach and thorough assessment of how use of AI align with and impact the objectives and purposes of the Convention, considering both their benefits and challenges. India is ready to actively participate in the discussions on this matter.

15. 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. We urge States Parties to work together in a spirit of consultation and cooperation, which is the cornerstone of multilateralism, to ensure that we uphold the provisions of the Convention. 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.

16. 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.
