

**INDIA : STATEMENT BY H.E. GINCE K MATTAM
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA TO THE OPCW
AT THE 107th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
NATIONAL STATEMENT**

(check against delivery)

Chairperson,
Director-General &
Distinguished delegates

The Indian delegation thanks His Excellency Andrés Terán Parral, Ambassador of Ecuador, for his chairmanship of the 107th session of the Executive Council. We look forward to having a very fruitful and productive session under your able leadership.

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.

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.

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.

India is of the view that full and effective national implementation of the Convention by States Parties, inline 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.

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, 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. The methodology under discussion for assessing the risk of Schedule 2 plant sites, for calculating the reinspection frequencies may be reviewed in line with the Convention.

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.

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 and hope that both sides will continue to maintain this constructive approach in their efforts.

India appreciates the efforts of the Technical Secretariat for focusing on the role of AI in advancing the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We will actively participate in the Conference to be held in Morocco later this month. We have nominated two experts to take part in the panel discussions, and look forward to finding new areas of collaboration and cooperation.

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. In this regard my delegation is happy to share that India has taken a decision to contribute to the Voluntary Fund for Assistance under Article X of the Convention.

India hosted the Analytical Skills Development Course to enhance analytical skills relevant to the CWC and to share knowledge on laboratory best practices, in collaboration with the Technical Secretariat at the Indian Institute of Chemical Technology, Hyderabad, from September, 2 to 13, 2024. Participants from 20 countries from the Asia, Africa and GRULAC regions benefited from this programme. India stands ready to support all efforts to promote the peaceful uses of chemical technology and enhance international cooperation in this field.

We are glad to inform this Executive Council that under the OPCW Mentorship/Partnership Program for 2023, Indian and Kenyan delegations have engaged successfully through mutual visits and virtual meetings during 2024 to achieve the required outcomes. Five days program between National Authorities of India & Kenya, was conducted successfully from 23 to 27 September 2024. The discussions focused on sharing of best practices in responsible manufacturing and trade and exercises in chemical disaster management. In-depth discussions were held between the visiting Kenyan delegation and the Indian side on CWC national implementation. India is happy to extend similar mentorship programme to other interested States Parties through the OPCW.

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.

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.

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.