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**SRI LANKA**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ADAM M.J. SADIQ  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SRI LANKA TO THE OPCW  
AT THE TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Chairperson of the Conference of the States Parties,  
Ambassador Eduardo Ibarrola-Nicolín of Mexico  
Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü,  
Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, on behalf of my delegation, allow me to congratulate Your Excellency Mr Eduardo Ibarrola-Nicolín, Ambassador of Mexico, on your election as the Chairperson of the Twentieth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. My delegation is confident that under your able stewardship, you will steer this conference towards a successful conclusion.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our warm appreciation to Ambassador H.E. Vesela Mrđen Korać of Croatia for her excellent work and commitment during the Nineteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

Further, I would like to convey our sincere thanks to Director-General, H.E. Ahmet Üzümcü, for his dynamic leadership and the Technical Secretariat for its sterling efforts and dedication to ensure the effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Dr Alireza Jahangiri, on behalf of the NAM States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China.

In April this year, at a solemn commemoration held at Ieper, Belgium to mark the centenary of the first large scale use of chemicals during the First World War, the international community was reminded of the horrendous consequences of chemical warfare. However, even after a century of experiencing such painful human suffering, we are yet to realise a world free of chemical weapons. The world is today experiencing new waves of terrorism. With the rapid advancement of science and technology, the fear psychosis associated with the potential emergence of terrorist groups with chemical weapons capability continues to grow, demanding new preventive measures and global cooperation.

In this backdrop, the role of the OPCW remains indispensable and vital in the global struggle towards disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The OPCW



must be commended for its dedicated efforts in pursuing effective disarmament measures to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons and deter chemical terrorism.

While unreservedly condemning the recent cold-blooded terror attacks in Paris and elsewhere in the world, Sri Lanka which lost thousands of innocent lives and suffered wanton damage and destruction of property, due to terrorism, calls upon the international community to stand firm and united in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, irrespective of the source or target of this evil menace.

In this regard, Sri Lanka welcomes with appreciation, the ongoing work of the Open Ended Working Group on Terrorism and the discussions with regard to the legal accountability of non-State actors and preventive measures on the hostile use of toxic chemicals as weapons.

While noting the shifting role of the OPCW from destruction of chemical weapons to the non-proliferation and prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons in the years ahead, my delegation welcomes the Technical Secretariat's paper, "The OPCW in 2025: Ensuring a World Free of Chemical Weapons". However, we believe that measures identified in the 2025 Plan should not duplicate activities that have already commenced, but rather, we adopt new strategies and mechanisms to face unforeseen future challenges with the benefit of the lessons learnt so far.

While verification, capacity development, engagement and organisational development remain central in the new roadmap towards the future OPCW in 2025 and beyond, the demonstration of genuine political will of Member States to cooperate with each other by intelligence sharing, prosecution or extradition of persons who are alleged to be involved in acts of terrorism, especially with regard to chemical terrorism, are crucial.

In contrast to the impressive journey that the OPCW has so far made in its quest to rid the world of chemical weapons, the total elimination of the declared chemical weapons stockpiles, old chemical weapons and abandoned chemical weapons still remains as a goal unaccomplished and continues to pose a threat to international security.

In this regard, we urge all possessor States Parties to comply with their obligations for a full and speedy destruction of all chemical weapons as stipulated in the Convention, which would bring the world closer towards the OPCW's cherished goal of a - "World Free of Chemical Weapons".

Sri Lanka, as an early signatory of the Convention in January 1993, made a solemn pledge to the international community to remain committed to the principles on which the OPCW was founded. Under Article VII of the Convention relating to national implementation measures, Sri Lanka established the National Authority for the Implementation of Chemical Weapons Convention, under the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, in 2004.

In September this year, with the assistance of the OPCW, and in collaboration with a leading industrial company, Holcim Lanka Ltd , a capacity building programme on the Safe and Secure Management of Hazardous Substances was held in Sri Lanka. The objective of the programme was to familiarise the participants on the detection of the presence of chemical hazardous substances and also to create awareness on emergency preparedness and hazardous waste management in the country. Further, as a part of the OPCW Associate Programme 2015, Load Star (Pvt) Company Ltd of Sri Lanka hosted the industrial attachment of two

participants from Tunisia and Poland in September 2015, enabling them to gain practical experience in a sophisticated industrial environment.

While appreciating the notable cooperation from the Technical Secretariat, my delegation believes that it is imperative for the Technical Secretariat to continue its assistance to developing countries, with the understanding that each country has its own diverse spectrum of difficulties in fulfilling national obligations towards the CWC.

Further, we wish to emphasise that allocation of adequate financial and human resources in the annual Programme and Budget of the Organisation for the implementation of Article XI related programmes and initiatives within the Technical Secretariat, remains crucial for the effective promotion of international cooperation for the benefit of States Parties through the transfer of technology, material and equipment for peaceful purposes in the chemical field.

Sri Lanka also welcomes and supports the recommendation of the Executive Council for the establishment of an Advisory Board on Education and Outreach and believes that it would strengthen the interaction with chemical industry, the scientific community, academia, and civil society organisations on issues relevant to the Convention and ensure that the outreach activities of the Organisation and the States Parties are conducted in an effective, sustainable and cost-effective manner. We also would like to emphasise that in order to realise these objectives, the Board should act in a fair and holistic manner, giving equitable geographical and gender balanced representation in its composition.

Sri Lanka is not a possessor State of chemical weapons nor has it developed, produced, acquired, stockpiled or transferred chemical weapons. We categorically condemn the use of chemical weapons or toxic chemicals as a weapon anywhere, at any time, by any Party, under any circumstances, as such use is reprehensible and contrary to the legal norms and standards of the international community.

While taking note of the work carried out by the Fact-Finding Missions with the cooperation of the Syrian Government and the work in progress on the elimination of the chemical weapons and the destruction of chemical weapons production facilities in the Syrian Arab Republic, Sri Lanka remains hopeful that it would be able to achieve the full destruction of the chemical weapons production facilities and chemical weapons in the shortest possible time frame. My delegation also takes cognisance of the establishment of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). It is our belief that JIM would conduct its mission in a professional, objective and impartial manner.

Sri Lanka attaches great importance to the universality of the Convention and believes that a collective global approach in disarmament remains paramount, for the fruits of this endeavour to be enjoyed by the international community. In this context, my delegation welcomes the newly joined members to the Convention, Myanmar and Angola and urges other States who are still not members to, accede to the Convention.

In concluding I wish to request that this Statement be issued as an official series document of this Session.

Thank You.