



**National Statement to the Fifth Review Conference of
Chemical Weapons Convention
15-19 May 2023**

**Chairperson,
Mr. Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates**

1. At the outset, Indian delegation congratulates H.E. Ambassador Henk Cor van der Kwast, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands on his election as the Chair of the Fifth Review Conference. We are confident that you will steer the sessions of this important Conference to a successful conclusion, and assure you of our full cooperation.

2. My delegation commends H.E. Ambassador Lauri Kuusing, Permanent Representative of Estonia for his hard work and dedication in leading the deliberations of the Open-Ended Working Group set up for Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference. We also thank Director General Ambassador Fernando Arias for his informative statement as well as his support throughout the preparatory period.

3. India attaches great importance to this Review Conference as it takes place at a critical time in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, when it has completed 25 years of its adoption by States Parties. The Convention has been a unique and non-discriminatory disarmament instrument and is a model for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under verification.

4. India is firmly opposed to any use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anybody, and under any circumstances and believes that any allegations of use of chemical weapons must be dealt with strictly as per the provisions and procedures laid down in the Convention and uphold the delicate balance of powers enshrined under it. We must continue to work together to strengthen the universal norm against chemical weapons as well as the broader non-proliferation regime.

5. In recent years, there have been a number of developments in science and technology that impact the Convention and the Organisation, as well as the ability of States Parties to implement the provisions set out in the Convention. The Scientific Advisory Board has an important role in monitoring such scientific and technological advancements and provides suitable advice to the Organization and States Parties.

6. Let me highlight India's position on some of the issues being deliberated under this Review Conference:

Verification

7. On verification, India hopes that the milestone of 100% destruction of declared stockpiles this year will be reached and underscores the importance of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the verification system. We believe that adaptation of the verification regime is essential in light of emerging challenges. It is important to adopt a more transparent, effective and objective criteria and modalities of inspection. In this regard, India has contributed its proposals through a working paper to the Review Conference.

8. We stress the obligation that all States Parties submit timely, accurate and complete declarations consistent with the provisions of the Convention under Article VI, and welcome the optimization of Article VI inspections procedures and tools including the introduction of online software solutions for submission of declarations.

Enhancing International Cooperation and Assistance

9. India strongly 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. It is important that the provisions of the Convention are implemented in a manner that does not hinder legitimate activities, especially in developing countries.

10. We believe that international cooperation activities under the OPCW can play a crucial role in enhancing capabilities of States Parties to fully implement the Convention. Keeping in mind this belief, India has contributed to the enhancement of analytical and laboratory skills by training more than 100 experts from developing and least developed countries.

11. The new Centre for Chemistry and Technology could be a useful platform for scaling up ICA programmes. New tools such as Online Self-Assessment Tool, Medical Action Plan, on-line Protection and Assistance Databank, reinforced hybrid training cycle can also further strengthen protection capabilities of States Parties.

12. It is important that programmes on promotion of chemical safety and security, capacity building, technical assistance and international cooperation are drawn up on a needs-based approach to achieve optimum results.

Universality and National Implementation

13. As the original signatory to the Convention, we support all efforts to achieve its universality and effective national implementation. India strongly urges the non-States Parties to join the Convention and calls for redoubling of efforts to achieve universality.

14. There is an urgent need of developing effective national implementation of the Convention in all States Parties. The discovery of new toxic chemicals, technological advancements in the deployment and dissemination of chemical weapons and threat posed by non-State actors are of serious concern. It is our firm belief that full and effective national implementation by States Parties will help to address these challenges

and secure the global supply chains of chemicals. India stands ready to assist interested States Parties by sharing its experience on national implementation through the Mentorship Programme.

Organizational Governance

15. Organizational governance is the key to ensuring that OPCW remains fit for its role and future challenges. India supports greater geographical diversity and gender balance in the Organization. We welcome the recommendation to establish a working group to prepare a strategy for greater diversity.

External Engagement

16. India believes that regular and close engagement between the OPCW and other relevant international organizations, the chemical industry, academia, youth, civil society, and non-governmental organizations is advantageous for the work of the OPCW and the implementation of the Convention. India encourages greater outreach and external engagement by OPCW with relevant international organizations to share experiences and best practices. India welcomes the establishment of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology and encourages it to develop partnerships with academic and scientific institutions of repute to foster research in field of chemistry.

17. To conclude, India underlines the importance of achieving consensus in the Review Conference as the only way forward. We emphasize the need for all decisions to be taken by the States Parties in consultation with each other and a spirit of cooperation. India hopes that the Review Conference will reinforce unity of purpose among all States Parties and provide clear roadmap for implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention over next five years. India is willing and ready to engage constructively with all States Parties to build consensus and achieve successful outcomes at the Review Conference.
