

Embassy of India

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Press Release

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India calls for constructive engagement, dialogue and unity of purpose at the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention

India has called for constructive engagement, dialogue and unity of purpose at the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention on November 23, 2018 in The Hague.

Addressing the Fourth Review Conference, Permanent Representative of India to Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Ambassador Venu Rajamony said the need of the hour is constructive engagement, dialogue and unity of purpose. Any long-lasting and effective solution to the challenges faced by the OPCW can only be found through wide- ranging consultations involving all States Parties. As a founding member of OPCW, India has always emphasized the importance of the principle of consensus enshrined in the Convention and the need for decisions to be taken by the States Parties in consultation with each other.

Ambassador Venu Rajamony said in his statement that the aim of the Chemical Weapons Convention is “to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons”. As the destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles nears completion, OPCW must continue to implement its disarmament mandate by focussing on preventing the re-

emergence of chemical weapons as well as the risk of their proliferation. This is vital in fulfilling the OPCW's crucial role in enhancing international peace and security.

He said the OPCW has effectively addressed a number of complex challenges during 21 years of its existence. This is the result of the continued commitment and collective endeavor of States Parties working in tandem with the professional and competent Technical Secretariat. It is a matter of grave concern that despite our best efforts, there has been an increase in allegations and incidents of use of chemical weapons in different parts of the world such as Malaysia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq. India fully shares the concern over the possibility of use of chemical weapons and expresses its deepest sympathies to the victims of chemical weapon attacks and their families.

Ambassador Venu Rajamony said it is India's consistent position that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anybody, under any circumstances, cannot be justified and the perpetrators of such abhorrent acts must be held accountable. The use of chemical weapons is in complete disregard of humanity and is reprehensible and contrary to the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention as well as accepted international legal norms. India believes that it is important to maintain the credibility and integrity of the Convention. Hence, it is essential that all investigations of alleged use of chemical weapons are impartial, objective and conducted strictly in accordance with the Convention, utilizing all its provisions.

Stating that India is deeply worried about the reports of the so-called 'Islamic State' or ISIS/ISIL acquiring chemical weapons and their delivery systems, Ambassador Venu Rajamony said a significant step in combating this challenge was taken when the Executive Council adopted in 2017, by consensus, its decision on addressing the threat posed by the

use of chemical weapons by non-state actors. India requests the Technical Secretariat to continue to monitor this threat and report to the Executive Council on this issue.

Ambassador Rajamony said efforts in the OPCW should be aimed at eliminating all possibilities of any future use of chemical weapons. There are daunting challenges ahead such as discovery of new toxic chemicals, advancements in deployment and dissemination techniques and increasing threat of use of chemical weapons by non-state actors. The growing complexity of global security environment calls for greater vigilance and continued efforts by both OPCW and the member states towards achieving general and complete chemical disarmament. He noted that it is regrettable there has been increase in division amongst State Parties, which needs to be bridged through dialogue and consultations, to allow for effective functioning of the Organization.

Ambassador Venu Rajamony concluded reiterating India's willingness for all discussions with States Parties to find ways and means to strengthen the Convention and its effective implementation, within the framework of the Convention.
