

Statement by Ambassador Htin Lynn
Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
at the 22nd Session of the Conference of the State Parties to the Chemical
Weapons Convention
(The Hague, 29 November 2017)

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. At the outset, allow me to extend my warmest congratulations to you Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki of Morocco for your well-deserved election as the Chairperson of the 22th session of the Conference of the State Parties. Our appreciation also goes to your predecessor Ambassador Dr. Christoph Israng of Germany, for his outstanding stewardship during the previous session.

2. My delegation expresses its deep appreciations to the Director-General Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for making the OPCW vibrant and responsive multilateral organization and for getting rid of almost-all declared chemical weapons stockpiles and addressing challenges on the use or alleged use of chemical weapons. Taking this opportunity, I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Fernando Arias of Spain on his unanimous recommendation by the Executive Council for the position of Director-General of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW. I assure him of my delegation's full support and cooperation, and we are looking forward to working closely with him.

Mr. Chairperson,

3. My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Bolivian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of NAM CWC States Parties and China.

4. At the same time, I would like to make the following points in our national capacity.

5. We believe that the annual Conferences of the State Parties are very important forum for every State Party and they serve as important platforms to re-synergize our collective commitment. As a member-driven organization, State Parties' commitment to the implementation of the CWC is vital to make

the world free of Chemical weapons. To this end, our support to the Technical Secretariat is also instrumental.

6. Myanmar is proud to be a state party to the Convention that bans an entire category of weapons of mass destruction and simultaneously addresses proliferation concerns. Near-universal membership to the Convention is a success we all can be proud of. However, as single non-adherence to the Convention poses a threat to integrity and effectiveness of the Convention, we should redouble efforts to achieve universality. We call upon states that are not yet Party to the treaty to ratify or accede to the Convention without delay.

7. As we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the founding of the OPCW, significant achievements have been made on universalization and destruction of declared chemical weapons. These extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons and progress made thereof have been duly recognized by the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013.

8. At present, we have an impressive membership of 192 States Parties representing about 98% of the global population and worldwide chemical industry as well as an approximately 96% of World's declared chemical weapon stockpiles verifiably destroyed. These figures speak for themselves.

9. In this connection, Myanmar welcomes the completion of the full destruction of Russia's chemical weapons programme under OPCW verification. In light of the huge size of the chemical arsenals destroyed by the Russian Federation successfully and early than extended timeline, this is indeed a significant milestone in our collective efforts making the world free of chemical arsenals. I pay my tribute to the OPCW inspectors for their hard work done and expertise demonstrated in this mission. The progress made by Libya on the destruction of remaining category 2 chemical weapons is also laudable.

10. Myanmar condemns any use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as a weapon by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances. We believe that any such use should be subject to investigation by the Technical Secretariat. We appreciate the hard work done by the Fact-Finding Mission in Syria and the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). When addressing the use or alleged use of Chemical Weapon, we should not in any way allow any differences that could eventually lead Member States to polarization and division. More time and space should be given to clarification, consultation and cooperation processes to identify a course of action acceptable to all.

Mr. Chairperson,

11. Let me briefly touch on recent activities of Myanmar as a non-possessor State Party to the Convention. We have been submitting the annual and other declarations in line with the provisions of the Convention.

12. The Myanmar National Authority for the implementation of the CWC has been up and running since August 2015. As a robust domestic legislation is a prerequisite for an effective implementation of the Convention, our national authority is working on drafting and adoption of a legislation, a step in our roadmap. As many States Parties require the Secretariat's support in addressing the gaps in their implementation legislation, Myanmar also needs legal expertise by the Secretariat to finalize our domestic legislation.

Mr. Chairperson,

13. Clearly, the work of the Organization and Technical Secretariat for a world free of chemical weapons and of the threat of their use, and fostering cooperation in chemistry for peaceful purposes for all is far from over. While continuing with our present mission, we should prepare ourselves for future challenges. In this context, we welcome the work of the Open Ended Working Group on future priorities (OEWG-FP) and on Terrorism and its Sub-working group on Non-State Actors, and the Chemical Industry Coordination Group. We believe that the final outcomes of such important works can help shape future direction of our Organization. The upcoming Review Conference will certainly be an opportunity to crystallize our vision and to take prudent steps, hopefully, for our way ahead.

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates,

14. ***“Chemical Weapons are horrific, immoral and inhumane. Man should never use them against mankind.”***

15. With these words, Mr. Chairperson I request that this statement be issued as an official document of the Conference and posted on the external server.

Thank you.
