



**ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION  
OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

**Closing Remarks**

**Symposium on Women in Chemistry**

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Deputy Director-General of the OPCW*

**The ChemTech Centre  
The Netherlands  
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Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we draw to the conclusion of this important Symposium on Women in Chemistry, it is my honour to deliver the closing remarks not just as the Deputy-Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), but also as an avid supporter and advocate for the promotion of women in chemistry.

Over the past two days, we have witnessed the power of collective knowledge, experience, and determination as we have explored the invaluable contributions of women in the field of chemistry.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the esteemed speakers. In particular, I wish to thank the representatives from UNICRI and UNIDIR, Professor Olubokula, the distinguished panellists, and all you participants who have generously shared their insights, expertise, and personal journeys. Your contributions have enriched our collective understanding of the critical role that women play in advancing the field of chemistry and promoting a safer and more peaceful world.

Throughout this Symposium, we have celebrated the achievements of extraordinary women scientists, highlighting their innovative research, ground-breaking discoveries, and forward-looking

leadership. We have recognised their resilience in the face of adversity, their commitment to excellence, and their unwavering dedication to upholding the principles of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Moreover, this Symposium has paved way to reflect deeper upon the challenges that women continue to face in the scientific community. We stand committed to removing the systemic barriers, biases, and stereotypes that hinder their progress and limit their opportunities. Our collective responsibility is not only to dismantle these barriers but also to foster an inclusive environment and create equal opportunities for all.

We have also explored the connection between gender equality and effective disarmament efforts. By empowering women in the field of chemistry, we strengthen our capacity to address the complex challenges posed by chemical weapons and to promote peace and security worldwide. It is imperative that we continue to advocate for gender balance, equal representation, and the meaningful inclusion of women in decision-making processes globally within the disarmament and non-proliferation field.

I am delighted that this year's Symposium takes place at the new ChemTech Centre opened on 12 May 2023 by His Majesty King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands. This Centre serves as a

landmark investment to foster, promote, and sustain OPCW's capabilities to keep pace with rapid scientific and technological developments. Strengthening such capabilities is critical to the Organisation's mission of safeguarding the Chemical Weapons Convention. Hosting the Symposium at the ChemTech Centre not only underscores our commitment to empowering women in chemistry but also ensures that we are offering the best platform possible for these important discussions and exchanges. It is symbolic of a future where the barriers faced by women in chemistry are a thing of the past, and the OPCW is at the forefront of leading this lasting change.

Looking ahead, let us not allow the insights gained during this Symposium to remain confined within these walls. It is our duty to take these discussions, recommendations, and best practices back to our respective institutions, organisations, and communities.

By fostering a culture of inclusivity, we can collectively create a more diverse and resilient chemistry community.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation the International Cooperation and Assistance Division, and the International Cooperation Branch in particular, who have worked tirelessly to ensure the success of this symposium.

As we conclude this OPCW Symposium on Women in Chemistry, let us carry forward the spirit of collaboration, determination, and empowerment that has defined our time together.

Together we can, and we must, create a future where women's contributions in chemistry are fully recognised and valued, and where their voices shape the path towards a safer and more prosperous world.

Thank you all for your active participation and for joining us in this important conversation.

May we continue to work together towards a world free from the threat of chemical weapons, where diversity and equality flourish.

I thank you and wish you a safe return journey.

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