



**STATEMENT
TO THE ELEVENTH SESSION OF
THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO
THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

BY

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(check against delivery)

Mr Chairman

Let me join other speakers in congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the Conference of States Parties. I wish you and your fellow office holders every success in your stewardship of the Conference and for the year ahead. I am confident that your diplomatic skills will enable us to achieve a successful outcome to this session and I pledge the full support of the Australian delegation to assist you in your work.

Mr Chairman

Australia is steadfastly committed to the object and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention because of its critical contribution to international peace and security. The highest goal of the Convention is undoubtedly disarmament through the verifiable elimination of all existing chemical weapons. Regretfully, progress towards achievement of this goal is slower than was originally anticipated and requires intensified effort by chemical weapons (CW) possessor states in the lead-up to the final destruction deadline of 2012.

Universality of the Convention and full adherence to all of its provisions contribute to international non-proliferation efforts to prevent new chemical weapons from being developed or acquired by state and non-state actors. We welcome further progress made this year under the two action plans on universality and Article VII implementation. The universality action plan has been especially successful, with Montenegro becoming the 181st state to join the Convention on 23 October. Similarly, we are pleased that nearly all of the countries of the Asia-Pacific region have joined the Convention.

Like a number of other countries, Australia has collaborated with the Technical Secretariat in assisting regional states parties to obtain the means necessary to meet their Article VI and VII obligations under the Convention. The CWC workshop held in Phnom Penh last year - organised jointly by Cambodia, Australia, Japan and the OPCW is a good example of the effectiveness of joint efforts to improve compliance. Australia, Japan and Indonesia are together planning a workshop in Jakarta scheduled for February next year designed to focus on practical aspects of implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention and the role of industry.

While the action plans have focused on strengthening the Convention, its object and purpose can be further reinforced by other measures that are

entirely consistent with the Convention's provisions. UN Security Council Resolution 1540 significantly strengthens measures for preventing proliferators obtaining materials for the production of WMD with its requirement for effective national export and transshipment controls. Effective export controls are a key element in supporting the non-proliferation objectives of the CWC without hampering legitimate trade and technology transfers for the peaceful uses of chemistry.

Mr Chairman

Australia is concerned about the possibility of terrorists acquiring and using chemicals for hostile purposes. We accordingly welcome France's constructive efforts in the Counter-Terrorism Working Group and intend to continue to work cooperatively with States Parties and the Technical Secretariat to address the threat of chemical terrorism.

Mr Chairman

Turning our attention to the Conference's agenda, we believe we have the opportunity here to strengthen further the implementation of the CWC regime.

Australia has in the past agreed to requests for extensions of deadlines for the destruction of Category 1 chemical weapons stockpiles, based on the provision of comprehensive CW destruction plans and the practical circumstances prevailing in each case. At this Conference, we shall similarly agree to extension requests that are before us for decision. However, we emphasise the need for all approved extensions to be predicated on effective management of the destruction process and high levels of international transparency and local security. We strongly urge all CW possessor states to work assiduously in meeting their agreed destruction deadlines.

Given the significance and proximity of the 2012 final destruction deadline established in the Convention, and the serious obligations of possessor states, Australia strongly supports the confidence-building measure of periodic Executive Council visits to chemical weapons destruction facilities in order to monitor progress and increase transparency.

Mr Chairman

Australia recognises the importance of the work being undertaken in the industry cluster process. We are disappointed by the collapse of negotiations on the draft decision regarding low concentration declarations thresholds for Part A Schedule 2 chemicals. We urge states parties to resume discussions on this long-debated issue in recognition of the risk that these production facilities pose to the object and purpose of the Convention.

To demonstrate tangibly Australia's support for a low concentration threshold, we have recently amended the CWC regulations in Australia to apply a permit threshold of 0.5 per cent to producers and users of all three Part A Schedule 2 chemicals.

We hope that agreement will soon be reached on an improved methodology for the selection of other chemical production facilities (OCPF's) for inspection. We also look forward to agreement in the coming year on measures to address the problem of late declarations and to reduce transfer discrepancies.

Mr Chairman

Each year, the Conference has the essential task of considering and adopting the Organisation's program and budget for the next twelve-month period. We welcome the Technical Secretariat's draft budget for 2007 – the second zero-nominal-growth budget in a row, which also provides for new initiatives. This proposed budget relies on states parties meeting their financial contributions in full and on time. Needless to say, Australia strongly urges all member states to do so.

Mr Chairman

The second review conference of the Convention, scheduled for April 2008 provides the opportunity for policy making organs to address the following important issues,

- the timely destruction of all chemical weapons;
- strategies and incentives to achieve full universality;
- improving the timeliness, quality and accuracy of Article VI declarations so as to enhance transparency and fairness in allocation of inspection load;
- resolving the causes of discrepancies between trade declarations;

- promoting best practice in tracking trade of chemicals listed under the Convention, including through the adoption of the World Customs Organisation Harmonized System of Codes;
- enhancing the role of the OPCW to assist States Parties to reduce the risks of chemical terrorism, within the scope of its non-proliferation mandate; and
- encouraging the fullest development of the OPCW Technical Secretariat as a professional, motivated and cohesive organisation.

I would like to extend Australia's support to Ambassador Parker of the United Kingdom in his capacity as chairman of the open-ended working group for the second review conference. We will make every effort to contribute to the preparations to ensure its success.

Mr Chairman

As we approach the 10-year anniversary of the Convention, we contemplate the effect of chemical warfare on many unsuspecting victims whilst also commemorating the success of the Convention as an effective multilateral instrument in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. The achievements of the Convention to date are due to a number of factors, including the ongoing efforts of the Director General and the highly competent and professional staff of the Technical Secretariat.

In addition, recent years have seen strengthened cooperation and pooling of resources between the OPCW and states parties, as evidenced by the provision of assistance to requesting countries and in the development of improved procedures and methods for the conduct of on-site verification activities. The commitment, support and initiative of these stakeholders should be commended and continuity into the future should be encouraged.

Australia looks forward to further close cooperation with the Technical Secretariat and other states parties in the coming year as we continue our term on the Executive Council.

Thank you very much Mr Chairman.