

**11TH CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES  
TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

**NEW ZEALAND STATEMENT**

**The Hague  
5 December 2006**

Delivered by New Zealand Acting  
Permanent Representative to the OPCW,  
Juliet Hay

It is with great pleasure that I address this 11th Conference of the States Parties and welcome you in the chair. You have this delegation's full support.

This year has brought a mixture of challenges and opportunities in the disarmament and international security realm. For New Zealand the primary goal remains the complete, verifiable, and irreversible elimination of weapons of mass destruction. In our view it is more important than ever to work towards this goal through a strong framework of multilateral agreements with verification provisions. The Chemical Weapons Convention already has a key position in this framework. By outlawing chemical weapons completely for all states parties, setting deadlines for the complete destruction of existing stockpiles, and providing for verification, it sets a standard that we would like to see emulated in other contexts.

2007 marks the 10th anniversary of the Convention's entry into force. It will provide an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the last decade. But while much has indeed been achieved it is not yet time to rest on our laurels. For all its successes, including near universality with the increase this year to 181 states parties, this organisation still has challenges to face if it is to achieve its principal goal of eliminating an entire category of weapons of mass destruction.

Before this Conference are several requests from possessor states for extensions to deadlines for the destruction of their chemical weapon stockpiles. Two seek extensions to 2012, the latest date permitted under the Convention. These requests go to the heart of this Convention. They cannot be granted lightly. It is important that any extension be for the minimum period necessary to complete destruction consistent with the legal obligations to which possessor states are subject. This is essential for the credibility of the Convention. We recognise, however, that destruction is a technically demanding, time consuming, and expensive process that presents considerable challenges, especially for possessors with large stockpiles. But where extensions are granted there needs to be a clear understanding that possessor states should make every effort to complete destruction more quickly if that is possible.

New Zealand has contributed to the goal of destruction by funding a G8 Global Partnership project at the Shchuch'ye destruction facility in the Russian Federation. This project, which was conducted under the umbrella of the arrangement between the United Kingdom and Russia, involved the reconstruction of the Puktysh electrical substation. The work has now been completed and the substation, which also serves the local community, was formally handed back to the Russian authorities last week. We wish to take this opportunity to express appreciation to the United Kingdom for facilitating our involvement. We are now investigating options for future New Zealand contributions.

An important component of this organisation's contribution to non-proliferation is its function of monitoring and inspecting industrial facilities. New Zealand is in the unusual position of having had all its facilities inspected. These inspections confirmed what we already thought to be the case -that there are no matters of concern arising with our facilities. There are, however, many facilities in other countries that have not yet been inspected and about which we do not have a similar level of assurance. For this reason we have supported the proposal made in the

budget context for an increase in the number of inspections of “other chemical production facilities”. While we would have preferred the increase to be at the level that the Technical Secretariat originally proposed we are aware that this causes some states concern. We trust that a compromise will be found during the course of this week that will both meet these concerns and also represent a real improvement on the status quo.

As the number of OCPF inspections increases it becomes even more important to have a credible and fair methodology of site selection. For this delegation the facilitator’s latest proposal represents a pragmatic compromise that we can accept. We urge others to work through their remaining areas of concern as a matter of priority so that a decision can be taken next year.

Looking ahead we would support further work being done to explore ways to improve the information provided in declarations. With the number of OCPF sites continuing to grow, and the reality that only a handful can be inspected each year, this information is critical to risk assessment.

Another important area of work relates to implementation of the Convention. Since the Plan of Action on Article VII obligations was adopted, real progress has been made. New Zealand certainly wants this momentum to continue. We are pleased therefore that the decision taken at CSP10 is to be extended for a further year. In our view, the approach in that decision, with its emphasis on cooperation and assistance is a positive one that has produced tangible results.

New Zealand has made two voluntary contributions in the course of this year which have paved the way for in-country technical assistance visits in our own region. We are pleased therefore that all Pacific Island countries have now established their national authorities and most have draft legislation. The challenge for them now is to progress the draft through the legislative process, something that can take time in any country.

In measuring progress over the next year we need to take into account the realities in the countries concerned. Many states that have not fully yet implemented the Convention have small bureaucracies, few resources, and many competing priorities. Some still need appropriately targeted assistance with implementation of the complex obligations in the Convention. We trust that the Technical Secretariat will continue its outreach in different regions in 2007.

Over the next year our preparations for Second Review Conference in 2008 will intensify. The Review Conference will give states the opportunity to evaluate the Convention’s ability to meet contemporary challenges including developments in science and technology, and the threat of terrorist acquisition of toxic chemicals. We should look for ways to ensure the Convention will remain relevant and effective in the twenty-first century.

We are looking forward to a productive Conference in the days ahead under your able chairmanship. Thank you.