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**OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
AT ITS TWELFTH SESSION**

Mr Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

1. At the outset, I wish to convey to you my warmest welcome to the Twelfth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.
2. I also wish to warmly welcome Ambassador Abuelgasim Abdelwahid Shiekh Idris of Sudan to the Chair. In Ambassador Idris, the Conference has elected an able and skilful diplomat. His experience and knowledge about the work of the OPCW, which I have witnessed throughout the years, will no doubt enable him to steer the proceedings of the Conference to success. Needless to say, he enjoys the full support of the Technical Secretariat.
3. His predecessor, Ambassador Alfonso Dastis of Spain, served the Conference with distinction throughout a very important year for the OPCW. For this we are all deeply grateful, and I wish him all the very best in his new responsibilities with his Government.
4. We are honoured to have with us today at this Conference Mr Sergio Duarte, High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, whose recent appointment to this important position reflects his outstanding experience and well-known contributions in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as the high commitment of the United Nations as a whole and the Secretary-General to these issues. Ambassador Duarte has extended his personal support in advancing the OPCW's cooperation with the United Nations. This backing is evidenced by the number of successful events held at the United Nations in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention. In this context, I wish also to thank his office, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), and his staff for their hard work and invaluable assistance.
5. I am sure I can speak on behalf of all of you in conveying our appreciation to the U.N. Secretary-General, H.E. Mr Ban Ki-moon, for his important and eloquent message to the Conference, and for the continued support that he has demonstrated for the Convention and for the work of the OPCW.



6. I am particularly grateful for the Secretary-General's gracious remarks complimenting the work carried out by the OPCW and the Technical Secretariat during our meeting in New York on 18 October. He assured me of his continuing support as the international community strives to achieve the goals of the Convention, which he described as an important pillar in the field of multilateral disarmament.
7. This has been a very special year for our Organisation and its Member States. The tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention was marked on 29 April 2007. Our Member States have not only sent messages of congratulation and support, but have also concretely demonstrated their full commitment to the work of the OPCW and to the objectives of the Convention by hosting commemorative events in every region and on every continent throughout the year. I am profoundly grateful for this outpouring of goodwill and dedication.
8. I will have more to say about the events related to the tenth anniversary further on in this statement, but what I wish to emphasise at this point is that the significance of these commemorations lies in the fact that support for the Convention is global and wide-ranging. Our States Parties, international organisations, the chemical industry, civil society, experts, academics, the media—in short, a broad spectrum of groups and individuals—have in 2007 recognised the OPCW's achievements during its first ten years and are resolved to ensure the success of the Convention. However, despite our achievements, significant challenges lie ahead.
9. I would now like to give you my customary overview of the highlights of the past year of work in the main programme areas of the Organisation.

Chemical demilitarisation and verification

10. The possessor States, as well as the Secretariat, have reported regularly to the Executive Council on the progress being made in the destruction of the declared stockpiles.
11. As at 30 September 2007, OPCW inspectors had verified the destruction of more than 25,020 metric tonnes of Category 1 and Category 2 chemical weapons, or approximately 35%, of the total stockpiles declared by the six possessor States Parties.
12. This represents a truly remarkable and unprecedented record of uninterrupted and progressive elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. Yet, although we should not fail to recognise such positive developments, we cannot ignore that 65% of the declared stockpiles still remain to be totally and irreversibly destroyed, and that the 29 April 2012 final deadline enshrined in the Convention for the completion of destruction is approaching very rapidly. I therefore appeal to all possessor States to spare no effort to that end.
13. As the Technical Secretariat reported to the Executive Council, on 11 July 2007, Albania became the first possessor State Party to eliminate its entire chemical-weapons stockpile. It did so in spite of the considerable technical challenges that it encountered along the way. This represents an historic achievement

of great significance, not only for Albania, but also for the Chemical Weapons Convention, and was made possible by the resolute commitment of Albania, as well as the invaluable substantive contribution of the United States of America and the additional support provided by Greece, Italy, and Switzerland.

14. In the United States of America, destruction has been proceeding apace, with approximately 48% of its declared stockpiles destroyed to date. The United States of America, the second-largest possessor State Party, met its destruction requirements in terms of the intermediate deadlines ahead of the 31 December 2007 deadline. This important accomplishment underscores the commitment of this State Party to meeting its obligations under the Convention and to helping other possessor States Parties in their efforts to destroy their stockpiles. Indeed, it should be noted that the United States of America has also destroyed all of its declared Category 3 chemical weapons.
15. In addition, let me recall that, following the decision of the Conference last year, the United States of America offered to host a visit to one of its chemical weapons destruction facilities (or CWDFs). The Chairman of the Executive Council, Ambassador Arguelles, representatives of Council members designated by their respective regional groups, and I visited the Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility on 22 and 23 October 2007. The Chairperson will present a report on this visit to the Council at its Fifty-First Session.
16. In the meantime, on my side, let me say that the visit offered an opportunity to witness first-hand the substantial efforts and progress made by this State Party towards achieving complete destruction in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, while at the same time protecting its workforce, the public, and the environment. It is a well-known fact that safety is an overriding priority in the United States chemical demilitarisation programme, and the safety statistics for all chemical demilitarisation sites are indeed impressive. I was greatly encouraged by the resolve of the authorities responsible for destruction in the United States of America to continue seeking opportunities to accelerate this process which, of course, will be substantially accelerated when the new facilities in Pueblo and Blue Grass come on line. The openness and transparency on the part of the United States representatives during the entire visit should also be commended.
17. For its part, the Russian Federation has also made significant progress in the last few years towards fulfilling its obligations under the Convention. It met the 29 April 2007 deadline for phase 2 destruction and has not only destroyed more than 23% of its Category 1, but also all of its declared Category 2 and Category 3 chemical weapons. The percentages periodically reported by the Secretariat on the destruction efforts in Russia are calculated in accordance with the plan for verification agreed between the Technical Secretariat and the Russian Federation for the existing destruction facilities. To ensure that the Technical Secretariat's vision is perfectly clear to all, I wish to reaffirm in its entirety the statement I made to the Executive Council last June at its Forty-Ninth Session about the verification plan for the Maradykovsky CWDF (EC-49/DG.17, dated 26 June 2007).
18. Given the size and complexity of its remaining stockpile and the relatively short time remaining, it is very encouraging to note that the Russian Federation remains committed to sustaining its destruction activities in accordance with its disarmament

obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, and that new plants are soon to be commissioned for that purpose. I am confident that all of these aspects will be addressed during a visit to the Russian Federation, which will be similar to the one just completed in the United States of America, and which will be undertaken by the Executive Council in accordance with the pertinent Conference decision (C-11.DEC/20, dated 8 December 2006). In this context, while recalling that it is the exclusive responsibility of each Possessor State to secure the destruction of its declared chemical stockpile, I do hope that the international community will continue to offer financial support to the Russian destruction programme, the successful completion of which is in the best interests of the world as a whole.

19. Significant achievements have also been recorded by the other possessor States. As at 30 September 2007, OPCW inspectors carrying out systematic verification of destruction at the facility in A State Party had verified the destruction of a quantity of Category 1 chemical weapons, corresponding to 94.25% of the total amount of this category of weapons, as well as all of its declared Category 3 chemical weapons. Similarly, as at that cut-off date, India had destroyed a quantity of Category 1 chemical weapons corresponding to 86.03% of the total amount of what it had declared in this category, as well as all of its Category 2 and Category 3 chemical weapons. I have always lauded and commended the strong commitment of these two States Parties to fulfilling their obligations, and I do so once again as an acknowledgment of how significantly A State Party and India have contributed to the achievement by the Member States of the goals of the Convention.
20. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has submitted detailed facility information to the Secretariat on the Rabta Toxic Chemical Disposal Facility, which has been designated to destroy both the chemical-weapons agent and the remaining precursors that it has declared. This State Party has destroyed all of its Category 3 and 39% of its Category 2 chemical weapons, an achievement for which it is also to be commended.
21. China and Japan have received an extension to 2012 of the deadline for the destruction of the chemical weapons abandoned by Japan in the territory of China. They have indicated that a joint implementation body has been established for the destruction of these chemical weapons. China and Japan have also announced a decision to introduce a mobile destruction system to accelerate the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons (or ACWs). The Secretariat continues to support both States Parties in their continuing efforts in this area and welcomes recent developments towards an early start to destruction activities. The manner in which both China and Japan are cooperating sets a very good example for other States Parties striving to fulfil their obligations under the Convention.

Chemical weapons production facilities

22. As you are aware, 12 States Parties have declared 65 chemical weapons production facilities (or CWPFs); the requests for conversion of 22 of these for non-prohibited purposes has been approved by States Parties. In addition, three CWPFs have been designated for temporary conversion for chemical weapons destruction purposes and, subsequently, for destruction.

23. Currently, 42 CWPFs have been destroyed (including two temporarily converted facilities) and 19 have been certified as converted for non-prohibited purposes. In total, about 94% of the chemical weapons production facilities have either already been certified as destroyed or have been converted for approved peaceful purposes.
24. Only one temporarily converted facility still remains to be destroyed after completion of its temporary conversion, and three other facilities still have not been completely converted for non-prohibited purposes. All the 19 converted facilities remain under systematic verification.

Non-proliferation and industry inspections

25. Let me now turn to the non-proliferation agenda of the Chemical Weapons Convention. While this too is widely recognised as a salient aspect of the OPCW's achievements in its first decade, it is now time for reflection and for action to ensure that the industry verification regime effectively and fully meets its objectives. This is all the more necessary in the light of possible attempts by non-State actors, including terrorists, to use chemicals for their evil purposes.
26. Our statistics on industry inspection, impressive as they are, require us to examine both the qualitative and quantitative dimensions relevant to such inspections, and to examine whether adjustments to the verification regime are required in order to keep it credible and effective in relation to some categories of facilities, and notably in terms of other chemical production facilities (or OCPFs).
27. Since my last report to you, in accordance with the approved 2007 Programme and Budget, 172 inspections have been completed, and we are on track to complete 200 inspections by the end of this year. The completed inspections include 10 at Schedule 1 facilities, 36 at Schedule 2 plant sites, 25 at Schedule 3 plant sites, and 101 at OCPFs.
28. Overall, in the ten years of its existence, the OPCW has successfully carried out 1200 industry inspections in more than 80 States Parties. Schedule 1 facilities have, on average, been inspected 6 times each. Schedule 2 facilities have each received around 3 inspections, and sampling and analysis now plays an increasingly crucial role in relation to verification activities at these facilities. Figures for Schedule 3 facilities indicate that almost all such facilities have been inspected at least once.
29. However, in relation to OCPFs, I have mentioned extensively in the past my apprehension about both the insufficiency of the inspection effort and the unfairness of the site-selection mechanism. Consequently, ever since becoming Director-General, I have proposed, through the budget, a sustained increase in the number of inspections of this category of facilities. Whilst progress has indeed been achieved as a result, I still believe that, given the large number of declared facilities, the low percentage of inspections, and the ability of a good number of OCPFs to quickly reconvert for producing prohibited chemicals, this particular trend should be further pursued.
30. In addition, a better distribution of OCPF inspections is urgently needed. Fairness dictates that countries with a larger number of such declared plants should receive

more inspections, which has not been the case until now, due to the arithmetic formula in place for choosing plants. Consequently, as I reported to the Executive Council in my Note (S/641/2007, dated 25 May 2007, and Corr.1, dated 4 June 2007), the Technical Secretariat, in using the powers accorded to it by the Convention, has modified the OCPF site-selection algorithm. The revised methodology will be applied as of 1 January 2008. Under it, the number of OCPF inspections that a State Party can expect will be a function both of the number of declared facilities and of their characteristics. In implementing the amended algorithm, the Technical Secretariat will ensure that the maximum annual number of industrial inspections received by Member States stays within the limits established in Part IX of the Verification Annex.

31. I should emphasise that my initiative for modifying the OCPF site-selection methodology is only an interim measure, since a definitive scheme can only be established when States Parties, in accordance with subparagraph 11(c) of Part IX of the Verification Annex, draw up proposals for an appropriate mechanism. With this in mind, I strongly encourage States Parties to continue their efforts to reach formal agreement on this important matter.
32. The verification regime for OCPFs could also significantly benefit from the inclusion in the declarations of more relevant information about each plant. If Member States would agree to this, the Secretariat could better focus the site-selection process on those facilities that are most relevant in terms of the Convention. Indeed, there have been instances of inspections having taken place in facilities that did not actually qualify for verification, with the result that nearly 10% of the OCPF inspections carried out since the year 2000 were unnecessary. This issue was raised during open-ended consultations held under the chairmanship of Ambassador Dastis of Spain, and the Technical Secretariat has been tasked to prepare a detailed proposal to be submitted to States Parties for their consideration.
33. A number of unneeded inspections has also resulted from the failure of States Parties to update their lists of OCPFs. Over the past 18 months, the Technical Secretariat has appealed to States Parties to review and update their lists of declared OCPFs, an initiative that, I am pleased to say, has resulted in the removal of several hundred OCPFs that are no longer declarable. The Secretariat is currently exploring additional ways to assist States Parties in ensuring that their declarations are up to date and correct.
34. I should also recall that, during 2007, the Secretariat also produced supporting documentation for ongoing open-ended consultations on industry inspections in general, including an update concerning the Schedule 2 risk-assessment methodology.

Sampling and analysis

35. Whilst referring to Schedule 2 inspections, let me briefly mention that the 18-month start-up phase of sampling and analysis under Article VI, which is obligatory for this category and an option for the remaining ones, is making good progress, a cause for some satisfaction.

36. Inspectors have carried out sampling and analysis at ten Schedule 2 plant sites—one in each of 10 States Parties. These inspections have demonstrated that our equipment and procedures worked well in a broad range and variety of conditions and that our inspectors have been well trained for this task.
37. In addition, these inspections were completed within the timeframe specified in the Convention. Lessons are learnt from every inspection, and the Secretariat continues to prepare for future inspections in which sampling and analysis will be used. A number of issues have emerged that we will bring to your attention in the future, including those arising from the predictable detection of scheduled compounds and from the decision of some inspected States Parties to accept the use of the OCAD database exclusively in blind mode.
38. At the end of this start-up period, the Secretariat will continue to evaluate the results in relation to sampling and analysis, and further updates will be provided in the future.
39. As a side issue, it is important to mention that the continued development of the Secretariat's own skills in the area of sampling and analysis greatly contributes to enhancing its own ability to conduct more effective verification activities under the Convention in relation to challenge inspections and inspections for alleged use.

Challenge inspections

40. Challenge inspections is an issue that I also wish to address here. In its efforts to continue improving its readiness to conduct such inspections, the Secretariat has conducted two exercises since the last session of the Conference. A two-day exercise in procedures and logistics was carried out at the beginning of May, with the aim of testing the Secretariat's ability to assemble a qualified inspection team at short notice and to prepare required equipment within tight time constraints.
41. With the assistance of the Government of the Netherlands, the Secretariat also held a challenge inspection field exercise from 10 to 14 September last. This exercise, the first to be carried out in an industrial environment since 1999, was particularly beneficial in terms of enhancing the Secretariat's readiness to carry out an inspection of this kind. The exercise was conducted in close proximity to the OPCW headquarters, thus enabling a greater number of representatives from the Executive Council to observe the activities of the inspection team.
42. I wish to reiterate once again our deep appreciation for the support of the Government of the Netherlands in organising this important exercise, as well as for the priceless cooperation of the chemical company DSM and its staff during all phases of the simulated inspection.
43. The lessons learnt from the exercise will play a crucial role in further improving the Technical Secretariat's capability to operate effectively if and when, at the request of a Member State and as established by the Convention, it is faced with the task of establishing the facts in relation to possible violations of the Convention. This exercise offered a unique opportunity for testing the Secretariat's readiness and capacity to conduct Article IX inspections and demonstrated that it is indeed in a position to effectively do so, should this ever be required.

44. At the same time, this exercise served to highlight the cooperation that the OPCW receives from the Member States and from the chemical industry, and the contribution that the industry makes to various aspects of the Organisation's work.

Verification Implementation System

45. I would also like to mention the successful development and implementation of the Verification Information System (VIS). In its report on the final audit of VIS-Industry in July this year, Security Audit Team IV fully endorsed the promotion of VIS-Industry's inclusion in the security-critical network of the Secretariat. The Secretariat now has in place a single integrated system for data entry, validation, and evaluation of the declarations made under Article VI. The VIS also incorporates modules for the selection for inspection of Schedule 3 and OCPF plant sites.
46. In addition, it also offers States Parties the possibility of submitting their Article VI declarations in electronic form, and I am pleased to note that seven States Parties are already doing so. The Secretariat will continue to actively support and encourage National Authorities to avail themselves of this tool. In this regard, the VIS project will, in the future, include the development of electronic-declaration tools for National Authorities. The move towards electronic declarations will facilitate the error-free uploading of declaration data into the VIS and will, with time, result in a savings in resources. To further facilitate the work of Member States in reviewing and analysing declarations by other Member States, the VIS allows for the distribution of appropriately redacted declaration data in electronic form.
47. Our verification efforts warrant the provision of training, to ensure that our inspectors have the requisite skills. A key concern is to ensure that all new inspectors are trained to the appropriate standard. A new group, comprising 22 inspectors from 17 States Parties from a variety of regions, started work at the beginning of the year. I wish to extend warm thanks to Belgium, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Serbia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America, whose cooperation has contributed so much to improving and maintaining the skills of our inspectors. The next group of new inspectors, 31 from 19 States Parties, has already been selected and is scheduled to begin work in January 2008.

International cooperation and assistance

48. The Technical Secretariat has continued to enhance its activities in the field of international cooperation and assistance.
49. In relation to assistance and protection, it has conducted courses and workshops to support capacity-building in Colombia, Kuwait, Malta, Costa Rica, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Uruguay, and Ukraine. At the request of a number of Caribbean countries, a training course to prepare a regional-response team for first responders was conducted in Trinidad and Tobago.
50. Bilateral consultations with Italy on issues regarding cooperation in the area of assistance and protection have also taken place. The first technical visit to assess the offers of assistance from Member States under paragraph 7 of Article X took place in

China. The Secretariat has also organised assistance-and-protection courses for first responders from different Member States and, in this context, has worked closely with the Governments of the Czech Republic, Finland, the Republic of Korea, Serbia, Slovakia, South Africa, and Switzerland.

51. I am also very pleased to report that, this year, two new regional initiatives were launched, involving capacity-building projects for States Parties in the North and in the East of Africa. The projects helped to enhance the capabilities of these countries to respond in the event of the use or threat of use of chemical weapons.
52. The demand for expert advice and assistance has been growing rapidly. Increasing concerns about chemical terrorism are very much behind some of these requests. Whereas in 2004 six States Parties requested OPCW advice and support, in 2005 13 did so, and in 2007 the number grew to 30 countries and more.
53. Progress has also continued with respect to the development of a protection databank. The databank was established and made available to Member States last year, but it is only available upon request from OPCW headquarters. The Technical Secretariat has continued working on this project in 2007 in order to make it available to Member States through the internet. It is expected that this project will be finalised by the end of this year.
54. The increasing demand from Member States for assistance-and-protection programmes indicates a steadily growing interest in the role of the OPCW as a credible provider of highly specialised skills. We will continue to offer all the support that we can in this regard, and I would appeal to Member States to continue making voluntary contributions, whether financial or in the form of technical expertise, so that we can adequately respond to the requests for programmes that the Organisation receives.

International cooperation

55. In the area of international cooperation, the Associate Programme has continued to be implemented in an exemplary manner. This Programme has been offered eight times since the entry into force, and 154 qualified technical personnel from as many as 78 of our Member States have been offered the opportunity to participate.
56. Yet again this year, this flagship Programme has been supported by national chemical industry associations from Europe and Japan, by the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and by Japan, which made a generous financial contribution. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to them all, as indeed we value the contributions of everyone who supports our international cooperation-and-assistance programmes.
57. Similarly, I would like to mention our special gratitude to the Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (VERIFIN) and to the Technical University of Delft in the Netherlands, both of which have hosted two very important courses on developing analytical and laboratory skills. In addition, to mark the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention, VERIFIN organised an international workshop on analysing chemicals, which took place in the Finnish city

of Tuusula with the participation of approximately 100 international experts. The Secretariat deeply values its continued collaboration with VERIFIN, as I myself had the opportunity to express personally when I opened such a workshop.

58. Through its international-cooperation programmes, the Technical Secretariat has also continued to provide financial support to events under its portfolio of programmes aimed at facilitating the international exchange of scientific and technical information on chemicals and equipment for the peaceful uses of chemistry.

OPCW Office in Africa and the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa

59. As we are all aware, the question of an OPCW Office in Africa has been on the agenda of the policy-making organs for some time. Pending a decision by States Parties on this issue, under my direction, the Secretariat has finalised a regional programme of cooperation that is designed to accelerate progress towards universality and to enhance national implementation in the region. The programme will also encourage broader participation by African States Parties in OPCW activities that promote the peaceful uses of chemistry, and will be coordinated by the Director of the International Cooperation and Assistance Division of the OPCW, Ms Kalimi Mugambi Mworia. I wish to express my appreciation to her, to the African Group, which provided its valuable input and endorsed the programme, and to the Executive Council, which at its Fiftieth Session welcomed the initiative.
60. It is my hope that the Programme for Cooperation with Africa, while addressing many of the motivations underlying the proposal for an OPCW Office in Africa, will also be of assistance to the policy-making organs as they continue their deliberations on this important matter.

National implementation

61. The Eleventh Session of the Conference approved an important decision on sustaining the follow-up to the plan of action regarding the implementation of Article VII obligations, which requested the Secretariat to continue and enhance its efforts to assist States Parties, upon request, in meeting their national implementation obligations.
62. The full national implementation of the Convention is, of course, indispensable in order to ensure both the compliance by each Member State involved, as well as the effectiveness of the Convention. The Convention seeks to establish a comprehensive regime, not only in relation to disarmament, but also in terms of non-proliferation—two issues that depend upon the efforts of States Parties, which are obligated to establish and reinforce the administrative and legislative measures that are required.
63. These indispensable measures must be established, so as to ensure that the key provisions of the Convention requiring systematic declarations, industry monitoring, controls on transfers of chemicals, and regulatory measures to identify and track chemicals of concern are all in place in each and every State Party. It is also vital that they be able to detect, pursue, and prosecute any breach of the Convention by their nationals and in any area under their jurisdiction or control.

64. The Technical Secretariat has continued to assist States Parties in meeting their Article VII obligations within the framework set by the decision adopted by the last Conference (C-11/DEC.4, dated 6 December 2006).
65. As at the end of October, the Secretariat had provided direct bilateral assistance to 13 States Parties preparing their legislative instruments. Additionally, 2 workshops on legislative drafting were held for a selected group of Member States in The Hague and in Palau for the Pacific Island States. Moreover, 4 seminars for parliamentarians were organised to assist them in the adoption of domestic legislation. The Secretariat has also worked closely with the National Authorities of 21 States Parties in the preparation and review of 26 legislative drafts. Nineteen of these drafts are already being considered by the parliaments concerned.
66. Almost all States Parties have now established a National Authority and, in most of them, steps are being taken to adopt the necessary legislative and administrative measures.
67. All these activities are clearly an outcome of the Article VII action plan adopted in 2003 by the First Review Conference.
68. These advances are also the result of the joint efforts of the Secretariat and of the many States Parties that have provided financial assistance, hosted technical meetings, or cooperated with us on technical-assistance visits.
69. I would note in particular the support that has been extended by the European Union, both through its valued Joint Actions and through individual States Parties, such as France, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, all of which have co-hosted National Authority training courses this year.
70. Regional and subregional meetings have also provided invaluable opportunities for interactions between the Secretariat and National Authorities. In this context, I would like to thank the Governments of Algeria, Belarus, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Kuwait, Qatar, South Africa, Spain, and Viet Nam for supporting us so generously in this area.

Implementation support

Mr Chairman,

71. Since the Eleventh Session of the Conference, 20 Member States have received bilateral technical assistance in areas covering the establishment and effective functioning of their National Authorities, the submission of declarations and notifications, and the drafting and enactment of implementing legislation and regulations. A total of four subregional workshops for customs officials on the identification and accurate reporting of transfers of scheduled chemicals were conducted in Algeria for North Africa, in Croatia for Eastern Europe, in Viet Nam for the Association of South-East Asian Nations (or ASEAN), and in Zambia for the South African Development Community (or SADC). The training of national-inspection escorts in the Latin American and Caribbean Member States was

the focus of a workshop in Argentina. A total of six regional and subregional meetings of National Authorities and other government officials involved in the implementation of the Convention took place in Cameroon, Chile, Belarus, Kuwait, Qatar, and South Africa. Five training courses for National Authority personnel were hosted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France, Spain, and Brazil.

72. Mindful of the role played by national parliaments in enacting national implementing legislation, the Secretariat continued its outreach to parliamentarians. A regional meeting of the members of parliament in Latin America and the Caribbean took place in Colombia. The role of parliaments was also examined jointly by parliamentarians and National Authority personnel at the Ninth Annual Meeting of National Authorities, which concluded just a few hours ago here in The Hague.
73. I wish to stress at this juncture that the activities and efforts of the Technical Secretariat will continue to be guided by your decisions. I know these are motivated by the need for States Parties to ensure that the prohibitions under the Convention are duly translated into domestic rules applicable to any individual or other entities operating within the jurisdiction or control of Member States.
74. Unless and until gaps and loopholes in domestic legislation and enforcement capabilities are removed, there will remain a latent threat of toxic chemicals falling into the hands of criminals or terrorists. That is a danger we must continue to address seriously and with determination.

The OPCW's contribution to global anti-terrorist efforts

75. The work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism continues to examine how the OPCW can contribute to global anti-terrorism efforts while respecting its own mandate. In this context, I would like to thank Mrs Annie-Claire Marie of France, the facilitator on this issue, for her invaluable contribution.
76. I am pleased that the Group is seeking to offer guidance on how the OPCW's ability to respond to the assistance-and-protection provisions under Article X of the Convention can be enhanced, and that it is also working to define ways that the Organisation can implement aspects of the Council's decision on our anti-terrorism efforts. We can look forward to progress in this crucial work.
77. In the meantime, the Secretariat continues to offer its contribution to the work of the 1540 Committee of the UN Security Council. The visit by the Chairman of the Committee, H.E. Mr Peter Burian, to the OPCW last May provided an important opportunity to discuss ways to improve our interaction with this important body in the framework of the Security Council's efforts to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and in particular, to prevent access by terrorists to such weapons.
78. The UN Secretary-General has personally conveyed to me his appreciation for the OPCW's contribution in the context of the UN outreach activities designed to promote the implementation of resolution 1540. As a result of our participation in these activities, there is now greater appreciation of the value of the Convention, which offers a comprehensive framework for preventing any misuse of toxic

chemicals and which, if implemented to its fullest potential, will enable UN member states that are Parties to the Convention to abide by their obligations under resolution 1540. We have thus also been able to foster the realisation that, by availing themselves of the programmes offered by the OPCW to its States Parties to assist them in fulfilling their obligations under the Convention, these countries will also be in a better position in terms of their reports, which they are obliged under Chapter VII to provide to the UN Security Council Committee. I would also like to recall that I myself brought this message to the Security Council when it met early in February 2007 to consider the implementation of resolutions 1540 and 1373.

79. It must also be pointed out that it is not just in the context of the Security Council's action under resolution 1540, but also in the framework of the UN global counter-terrorism strategy, that the international community has made clear its expectation that the OPCW will support global efforts to eliminate the scourge of terrorism. An added concern arises from the evidence, as shown this year in Baghdad where chlorine was used, that terrorists could resort not just to prohibited but also to common everyday chemicals. I am happy to see that, not only the Secretary-General, but also the European Union strongly condemned such a use of chemicals. The recently held Industry Protection Forum also recognised the relevance of this issue for the chemical industry.

Universality

80. The importance of achieving the universality of the Convention so as to fully achieve its objectives remains unquestioned. What is fundamental to the success of the Convention is not just compliance by Member States, but also universal adherence to this Treaty. Any single absence, irrespective of the size of the country (but especially if it is one with an active chemical programme and/or stockpiles of chemical weapons), could undermine the achievement of the objectives of the Convention. There can be no justification to withholding adherence to a Treaty that reflects the unified view of humanity about the illegality, the immorality, and the growing strategic irrelevance of chemical weapons. Such weapons can only threaten unprotected civilian populations and should therefore be regarded as weapons of terror.
81. An outstanding feature of the OPCW's progress is the wide adherence that the Convention has attracted in a relatively short time span, as was recalled by the Chairperson. With the expected ratification of Congo, the total membership will soon rise to 183—a figure signalling an unprecedented rapid growth for any disarmament instrument. With the Convention reaching a level at which universality is within reach, the rate of increase in the number of States Parties will be incremental, although of course, there are a number of countries that are close to joining.
82. This Conference will review and consider what further steps need to be taken to ensure that the remaining countries still outside of the Convention are encouraged to join, and to do so promptly. From the point of view of the Secretariat, we have faithfully implemented the guidance provided to us in the plan of action on universality and the subsequent decisions of the Conferences that followed. There were 40 States not Party to the Convention in 2003 when the action plan was adopted during the First Review Conference. Today there remain only 13, soon to be 12, after

Congo's ratification. The specific actions identified in the plan of action have proved their effectiveness and will continue to be relevant in terms of our future approach and strategy.

83. In that context, we have continued our outreach activities this year and have availed ourselves of every opportunity to engage with representatives of States that are not Party to the Convention. The details of our endeavours, including my own contacts, as well as presentations at various international forums (including the United Nations General Assembly, the First Committee, the Security Council, and also the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva), are provided in a Note (EC-50/DG.14 C-12/DG.4, dated 14 September 2007).
84. It is reassuring to know that some countries that still remain outside of the Convention are at an advanced stage in the process of accession, in that they have completed the necessary parliamentary procedures. This includes both Iraq and Lebanon. A team of Secretariat officials travelled to Lebanon in August, where they had productive discussions with the Lebanese authorities concerning that State's accession and how the OPCW can be of assistance in this endeavour.
85. At the end of October, the Technical Secretariat organised a training workshop in Amman, Jordan, for Iraqi officials who would be involved in the implementation of the Convention once Iraq becomes a State Party. This was the fourth such programme for Iraq and, in our view, indicates the seriousness it attaches to joining the OPCW. We look forward to that, and we remain ready to support them throughout this process.
86. We are also aware that countries such as the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, and Guinea-Bissau fully support the Convention and its objectives, but are hindered by logistical or resource constraints. Angola has shown encouraging responses to our latest démarches, and has sent representatives to a number of OPCW regional programmes. Myanmar, I have to say, now seems to have paused. We will continue to encourage this State to move towards accession. There are, on the other hand, countries that up to now have not indicated their intention of joining. This is understandably troubling to States Parties of the OPCW.
87. The lack of support for the Convention in the Middle East is of obvious concern. Egypt, Israel (a signatory State), and Syria continue to cite regional security issues as a justification for not joining the Convention. I have expressed on numerous occasions—and reaffirm today—the reasons why I believe these countries should promptly join the rest of the international community and become members of the OPCW. At the same time, I appreciate the willingness, especially on the part of Egypt and Israel, to continue our dialogue, especially in relation to steps that reassure us about their support for the principles concerned. In that connection, earlier this year I held a meeting in Cairo with high officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and subsequently, received in The Hague a high-level delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel. We will continue with our efforts, and I hope that during 2008 it will be possible to hold another workshop, similar to those held in 2005 and 2006, dedicated to the promotion of universality in the Middle East region.

88. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, on the other hand, has not responded to any of the OPCW's initiatives. I trust that the progress recently achieved in implementing UN Security Council resolution 1718 (and others related to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear programme) will encourage this State to begin addressing issues relevant to the Chemical Weapons Convention. After all, resolution 1718 also demands that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea provides transparency in relation to its programmes in other categories of weapons of mass destruction and the means of delivery. On our part, we remain ready and willing to support the accession to the Convention by this State if it decides to do so.
89. The importance of achieving universality and the full implementation of the Convention in Africa was highlighted at a workshop that the Secretariat organised in Algiers, Algeria, in June of this year. Here again, the financial assistance of the European Union and the Netherlands were crucial.
90. I reiterate my appeal to all the remaining States not Party to the Convention to seriously consider joining at an early date. Taking this step will advance the global cause of peace and security, and the regional benefits that would ensue, both in the Middle East and in North-East Africa, are self-evident.

Administration and human resources

91. Let me now turn to a number of important financial matters that are before the Conference for consideration and decision. Chief among them is the 2008 Draft Programme and Budget.
92. I was very pleased to see the progress that was made during the Fiftieth Session of the Executive Council in regard to the Programme and Budget for 2008, which culminated in its approval by the Council and recommendation to this Conference. In this regard I would like once again to thank the facilitators, Ms Diana Gosens of the Netherlands and Mr Dong-gy Lee of the Republic of Korea, for their tireless efforts. Furthermore, I would like to express my appreciation to all the delegations for the constructive spirit shown throughout their deliberations. I am confident that the Conference, as it considers this decision, will demonstrate the same level of satisfaction with the proposed Programme and Budget.
93. The Programme and Budget for 2008 reflects zero nominal growth in terms of expenditures, which builds on the trend we have been pursuing for the last three years. It is very much a consolidating budget, which aims to meet all of the OPCW's core objectives in an efficient and economical manner. In addition, the 2008 Programme and Budget provides States Parties with information on how the Secretariat plans to translate these core objectives into concrete activities in the coming years, very much in line with the principles of results-based budgeting.
94. I would now like to discuss the Medium-Term Plan. In accordance with Financial Regulation 3.8, the Draft Programme and Budget submitted to the Executive Council shall be accompanied by a Medium-Term Plan. During this Conference, you will have before you such a plan for the period from 2008 to 2010. It gives an overview of the aims and programme priorities for the next few years, and will be adjusted annually if this is required.

95. With regard to the External Auditor's report on the audited financial statements of the OPCW for 2006, I am pleased to note the unqualified audit opinion that the External Auditor has placed on the OPCW's financial statements for the period that ended 31 December 2006. In his report, the External Auditor noted the internal-control system as well as the improved format of the Financial Statements.
96. I am grateful to the External Auditor and his team for the support and advice that they have provided to the OPCW over the years. We will carefully review and assess every finding and recommendation that the External Auditor makes and implement those recommendations that will help further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our operations.
97. The delegations also have before them the Secretariat's income-and-expenditure report for the period ending June 2007. The Secretariat continues to closely monitor its programme delivery for 2007 to ensure that the activities approved under the 2007 Programme and Budget are implemented strictly in accordance with the decisions approved by the States Parties, and that no activities exceed funding levels.
98. In this connection, I would like to inform you that the outstanding 2007 assessed contributions reflect a receipt level of 80%. Although there has been a significant improvement in receipts over the past few months, I would like to emphasise once again that our ability to meet our core objectives in 2007, particularly in light of the fact that the 2007 Programme and Budget was a nominal zero-growth budget, still depends on our receiving States Parties' contributions in full and on time.
99. I thus urge all States Parties that have not yet done so to comply with their financial obligations under the Convention and to make their payments as soon as possible.
100. As I pointed out to the Executive Council at its Forty-Ninth and Fiftieth Sessions, unless further contributions are received during the year, we may have to draw on the Working Capital Fund—an exceptional step that should be considered only as a last-resort measure and not as part of the regular manner in which our business is conducted. I am sure you will all agree that programme delivery depends on financial stability. At this stage, I would like to draw your attention to my Note to the Conference circulated under C-12/DG.7 (dated 11 October 2007) on the use of the Working Capital Fund for the financial year to 30 September 2007.
101. Turning now to the matter of multi-year payment plans, I would like to recall that at its Eleventh Session, the Conference adopted a decision on a mechanism to encourage States Parties that are in arrears to regularise the payment of their outstanding annual contributions through the use of multi-year payment plans. I am pleased to mention that you have before you multi-year payment plans proposed by two Member States for approval by the Conference. I would like to use this opportunity to further encourage States Parties that are in arrears to regularise the payment of their outstanding annual contributions through the use of such plans, and in that way, secure their full standing and their rights under the Convention. The Secretariat, as usual, stands ready to provide any assistance and advice that is required.

Personnel matters

102. Since the last Conference, the Technical Secretariat has continued to improve its programmes, especially in the areas of recruitment, administration, and Human Resources services.
103. In 2007, after significantly shortening the period required to recruit new staff, the Administration Division has continued its drive to streamline recruitment processes and procedures by automating various systems and subsystems. During 2007 the Recruitment Section processed the recruitment of 48 fixed-term staff, as well as a number of short-term staff members that were recruited as the need arose.
104. In terms of recruitment, most of the reports are now generated by means of web-based systems, which now also contain information and records on post-management. This project was successfully completed in the third quarter of 2007.
105. In order to benefit from the experience of the UN Common System, in 2007 the Human Resources Branch invited the Executive Secretary of the International Civil Service Commission (or ICSC) to give his view on the effectiveness of the current operation of the OPCW's Human Resources Branch. In addition, the possibility was explored of establishing regular meaningful contacts with the ICSC so that the work of the Human Resources Branch, in terms of procedures, systems, expertise, and resources, can advance in a manner similar to that of other analogous organisations.
106. The Administration Division prepared papers on the entitlements that need to be aligned with those of the UN Common System. In this context, the Council has agreed to implement the scheme of travel-related lump-sum payments and has asked the Secretariat to report to it on how the scheme is working after a two-year period. The Council, at its Forty-Ninth Session, also agreed with the Secretariat and has recommended an amendment to the education grant, the provisions of which are contained in Staff Regulation 3.2(a). The provision of paternity leave has already been agreed upon by the Council at its Forty-Ninth Session. I would like to commend the Member States for agreeing to these changes, as these bring the OPCW into closer alignment with the policies of the UN Common System.

OPCW tenth-anniversary activities

107. This year we have been commemorating the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention; 2007 will remain a memorable year in that we will always recall the manner in which you, the Member States, came forward to show your support for the Convention and the work of the OPCW.
108. A special highlight of these tenth-anniversary commemorations was the unveiling, after a solemn ceremony, by Her Majesty Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands of the Permanent Memorial Dedicated to All Victims of Chemical Weapons on 9 May 2007. The memorial is a concrete symbol of the ever-growing global will to eliminate chemical weapons and to establish a world free of this scourge.

109. The Government of the Netherlands graciously funded the commissioning of this memorial, and the municipality of The Hague provided the funds for its placement and maintenance. The Secretariat is appreciative of the indispensable advice and technical and financial support it has received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and from the city of The Hague. Once again, I would like to express my gratitude to the Host Country for its generous support and cooperation.
110. A high-level meeting to mark the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the OPCW and of the entry into force of the Convention was held at the United Nations in New York on 27 September during the 62nd session of the United Nations General Assembly. Ambassador Duarte played an instrumental role in that very successful event, and I would like to thank him once again.
111. Forty Foreign Ministers and representatives from 124 States participated in the meeting, which highlighted the crucial contribution that the Convention and the OPCW have made to effective multilateralism and disarmament, and to the promotion of international peace and security.
112. I would like to thank the Netherlands and Poland for accepting my request and taking the lead in organising this event. They undertook a difficult and ambitious task that included numerous consultations in a number of countries. The efforts helped focus worldwide attention on the work of the OPCW and on the importance of the Convention.
113. The UN Secretary-General, H.E. Mr Ban Ki-moon, delivered an important statement in support of the Convention and on the work of the OPCW. In his statement, he characterised the Convention as a monument to the world's determination to eliminate one of the most inhumane types of weapons that has ever been conceived.

Events in Member States and other international organisations

114. In the framework of the tenth anniversary of the OPCW, around 30 national and international events took place around the world, further demonstrating the commitment and dedication of our Member States.
115. I would like to express my gratitude to the United Nations, which helped organise a number of important events. These included a seminar in Geneva, the High-Level Meeting in New York, and most recently, a panel discussion on the Convention in the context of the 62nd Session of the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. Ambassador Duarte once again assisted us here.

The OPCW Academic Forum and OPCW Industry and Protection Forum

116. The OPCW was also involved in a number of events held here in The Hague. One such was the OPCW Academic Forum, which was held on 18 and 19 September 2007, and which was a resounding success. Around 200 academics, scientists, diplomats, and policy-makers attended, and their contributions will be especially important as our preparations continue for the Second Review Conference, which will take place in April of next year.

117. Another important event was the previously mentioned Industry and Protection Forum, which took place with great success on 1 and 2 November here in The Hague. The financial support of the European Union (EU) under its Joint Action in support of OPCW activities in the framework of the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, helped ensure wide participation and the involvement of stakeholders in the Convention.
118. The Forum aimed to promote the role that the chemical industry plays in the effective implementation of the Convention and brought together around 250 participants from governments, international organisations, chemical manufacturers, chemical-industry associations, and the media. Participants discussed the latest developments in the areas of verification and implementation that are of relevance to the chemical industry, including sampling and analysis, assistance and protection, as well as safety and security at chemical plants.

The Tenth-Anniversary Trust Fund

119. As you all know, all tenth-anniversary events were financed from extra budgetary sources, since no funds from the Programme and Budget had been allocated for these activities. For that reason, the OPCW Tenth-Anniversary Trust Fund was established. The Technical Secretariat is grateful to all those who contributed to this fund, which was administered in accordance with OPCW Financial Regulations and the Draft Financial Rules.

The Second Review Conference

120. As you are also all aware, preparations for the upcoming Second Review Conference, which will take place from 7 to 18 April 2008, are already underway. A great deal of work, under the very able chairmanship of Ambassador Lyn Parker, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the OPCW, has been carried out since the last Conference.
121. The Technical Secretariat is in the process of producing a comprehensive document that will outline in detail the progress that the OPCW has made in terms of its work since the last Review Conference in 2003. This document will also include an analysis of the overall achievements and the challenges that lie ahead as the Organisation strives towards fulfilling its mandate under the Convention.
122. The open-ended working group chaired by Ambassador Lynn Parker has conducted eight meetings. It has addressed a number of key issues and has scrutinised them in a systematic way. It also gave chemical-industry representatives an opportunity to address the OPCW during a one-day meeting. In addition, this Group has considered a preliminary report from the Scientific Advisory Board, which addresses important issues.
123. In the upcoming weeks, non-governmental organisations will have the opportunity to discuss with the OPCW issues related to the Second Review Conference.

The Scientific Advisory Board

124. Since I have mentioned the SAB, allow me to make some remarks about its work. The Technical Secretariat and I, who are the direct beneficiaries of the SAB's work, make it a high priority to facilitate the work of this body.
125. Those of you who are familiar with how the OPCW operates will know that the funding of the activities of the Scientific Advisory Board is dependant to a significant extent on the voluntary contributions provided by Member States. At this stage, I would like to express my appreciation for those Member States that have generously either contributed to or have committed to contributing to the work of the SAB, namely Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.
126. Nevertheless, much work still remains to be done, particularly in the area of science and technology and the impact that they are having on the Convention. I hope that more Member States will respond favourably to my most recent call for voluntary contributions to assist in the work of the SAB. I would like to draw to your attention to the fact that, based on the operating rules of the Fund, the Secretariat can also accept contributions from non-governmental organisations, institutions, or private donors.

Conclusion

Mr Chairman,

127. In conclusion, I once again express my deep gratitude to our Member States for their active involvement in the work of the OPCW, for their staunch support to the Technical Secretariat, and to me. The commemorative events that I have already mentioned are tangible proof of the commitment of States Parties to the object and purpose of the Convention, and provide eloquent testimony of their dedication to the work of our Organisation, which could not take place without their support.
128. While we have recognised our successes, we must remain mindful of the challenges that lie ahead. Ensuring the elimination of chemical weapons in accordance with the deadlines given in the Convention, promoting its effective national implementation, further enhancing the non-proliferation provisions through a well-focussed industry verification regime—ensuring that it adequately covers all categories of facilities covered by the Convention—and, indeed, keeping pace with the inexorable march of science and technology and changes in industrial methods and processes are all issues that will require careful deliberation and consensus. Indeed these will also be the challenges that will emerge from the need to carry out constructively our international cooperation-and-assistance agenda. These have been the real hallmarks of our work, and I have no doubt that, with this mindset, the success of our work during this Conference will be assured.

I thank you for your attention.