

Statement by Ambassador Roland Bimo
Delegation of the Republic of Albania to the 12 Session of the Conference
of the State Parties of the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical
Weapons
November 6, 2007.
The Hague

Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Director General,
Honorable Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Albanian delegation I welcome Ambassador Idriz of Sudan as new Chairman of the Conference. Congratulations to you Mr. Chairman on your deserved election. We are confident that under your able leadership and diplomatic skill the conference will achieve its objectives. My Delegation pledges full support and cooperation.

I would like to express our gratitude and appreciation for his contribution to the work of our Organization to the outgoing Chairman of CSP, Ambassador Alfonso Dastis of Spain.

My country Albania, as a potential candidate for Membership into European Union fully subscribes to the statement of the EU delivered by H.E. Ambassador of Portugal, Mr. Juliu Mascarenhas, on the matters of substance for deliberation at this Conference

But, representing the country, possessor state, that was the first to eliminate the entire category of chemical weapons, as required by the Convention, I deemed appropriate to, very briefly, share a few thoughts.

First of all I would like to express deepest gratitude and appreciation to Secretary General of the United Nations H. E. Ban Ki Moon for the kind and encouraging words to my country, in his message to this Conference conveyed by High Representative for Disarmament H. E. Mr. Sergio Duarte.

While thanking you Mr. Director General and all Delegations for their words of appreciations towards my country's efforts in eliminating Chemical Weapons we will do our best to convey to my authorities and my people the atmosphere of this conference.

The year 2007 is the 10-th anniversary of the entering into force of the CWC. This anniversary was commemorated and celebrated through different events encompassing the whole globe. A number of valuable assessments were made during these events. We join those who believe that during a relatively short period of time an encouraging progress has been achieved towards the goal of eliminating chemical weapons from the face of the earth. Nevertheless many challenges remain.

For Albania, as a country in transition towards a functioning democracy and market economy, the destruction program was a challenge. But commonly held view that we perform better when we are challenged, proved true. We stood up to the difficult task and eliminated the danger posed by this cruel weapon.

In the process a number of technical problems and difficulties were encountered. These were of a nature that was impossible to predict until we were in the implementation phase.

The support of State parties, Executive Council, professionalism and dedication of the Technical Secretariat and able leadership of Director General Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter were of significant importance for successful completion of our destruction program. Our openness and maximum transparency helped built trust and understanding.

It has to be noted that the destruction of chemical agents was accomplished in a safe manner with regard to the safety of the personnel involved, safety of the environment and the population.

While the responsibility for observing and implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention is entirely of the state party, I would like to underline the importance of cooperation and support among state parties. The Convention made possible close collaboration among OPCW States Parties and the process in the Republic of Albania demonstrated the importance of cooperation in the elimination and the prevention of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This positive interaction among countries contributes to reducing the threats to global security and promoting the goals of international peace. Albania is grateful above all to US for their overall support. Its assistance was critical for Albania in completing its destruction of declared chemical weapons.

I am using this opportunity to thank the Governments of Switzerland Greece and Italy for their generous support.

OPCW has proven to be a very useful and efficient instrument in helping member states implementing the Convention and at the same time promoting industrial cooperation. Thanks to joint and collective efforts we are today, ten years after entering into force of the convention, closer to the ultimate goal of complete destruction of all stocks of chemical weapons.

The Albanian Chemical Weapons destruction program proved that the Convention is a valuable instrument and, in the words of Director General Mr. Rogelio Pfirter, during the commemoration meeting in Tirana, Albania on September 1, 2007 “its goals are achievable”.

I would like to direct a word of thanks and gratitude to Albanian experts that worked very hard, day and night in a dangerous environment.

Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, including but limited to, chemical Weapons, remains a real danger to world peace. To prevent proliferation continued efforts are necessary. By completing destruction program Albania has made a modest contribution. On the other hand a new chapter is opened, for Albania, already as non possessor state party, in joint efforts for the implementation of Chemical Weapons Convention.

We will continue to work closely with all State Parties, share our experience and render our contribution to the security, peace and stability.

At the end allow me Mr. Chairman to wish the Conference, under your able leadership, all possible success.

Thank you