



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

**BY**

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OPCW**

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Mr Chairman

Let me join other speakers in congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the twelfth Conference of the States Parties.

My delegation looks forward to working with you to help ensure this conference concludes successfully with outcomes that support our shared goals to enhance international peace and security.

Mr Chairman

We all have much to celebrate this year as we commemorate the ten-year anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention and of the Organisation established to ensure its full and effective implementation.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate the Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter, and his staff for their commitment and dedication to implementing the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention: ridding the world of chemical weapons once and for all and preventing their re-emergence.

We are proud of this Treaty as an outstanding example of an effective multilateral instrument that has already achieved so much in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and confident that states parties will continue to press forward on the Convention's objectives. Challenges remain and it will take time for the Convention to be fully and universally implemented.

We are pleased to note that membership of the Convention has now reached 182 states parties, including almost all countries in our own Asia-Pacific region. We are encouraged by the recent progress in destruction activities which has resulted in the verifiable destruction of more than one-third of the 71,000 tonnes of declared chemical weapon (CW) agent stockpiles. We congratulate Albania for having destroyed its entire chemical weapons stockpile, the first possessor state party to do so.

We are also pleased to note that more than a thousand inspections have been conducted by OPCW inspectors at declared Schedule 1, 2, 3 and other chemical production facilities over the past decade, making a major contribution to the non-proliferation objectives of the Convention by verifying that toxic chemicals and production capability are not being diverted for prohibited purposes.

Mr Chairman

Australia remains firmly committed to the object and purpose of the Convention. As such, we continue to urge all CW possessor states to make every effort to meet their agreed CW destruction deadlines so that the Convention's disarmament objective is fully realised by April 2012. We are pleased that a cycle of Executive Council visits to destruction sites in the Russian Federation and the United States has commenced. We view such visits as an important transparency and confidence-building measure.

The Convention is only as good as its implementation. Universality of the Convention and full adherence to all of its provisions contribute to international efforts to prevent new chemical weapons from being developed or acquired by state and non-state actors. We urge states parties to continue their efforts to bring all those outside the Convention into full membership.

While we welcome further progress on Article VII implementation during this past year, we note that a number of states parties are yet to adopt legislative and administrative measures to comprehensively implement the Convention. Indeed, a handful of states parties have yet to establish a national authority. It is important that the Technical Secretariat and member states maintain their commitment to assisting requesting states parties in their achievement of these Convention requirements as soon as possible.

Australia has continued its efforts to promote effective and universal implementation of the Convention, particularly in our region. To this end, Australia had the honour to jointly host two workshops this year in South-East Asia focussed on industry implementation of the CWC. The first workshop, held in Jakarta in February was co-hosted with Japan and Indonesia. The second was held in Manila in July and co-hosted with Japan, the Philippines and the OPCW.

These joint efforts enhance collaboration and cooperation among states parties and the Technical Secretariat to improve CWC compliance for the benefit of all.

Mr Chairman

My delegation recognises the importance of the work being undertaken in the industry cluster process.

I would like to turn now to the work on a revised selection methodology for inspections of other chemical production facilities. We welcome the Director-General's initiative to amend the current methodology from the start of 2008 as a means of ensuring a more balanced inspection load on states parties,

particularly those with a relatively modest chemical industry sector. Australia strongly supports the commencement of work on revising the declaration format for OCPFs to ensure that the limited inspection resources are directed to the most relevant facilities. We believe the 2005 Canadian paper could serve as a useful starting point in this respect. We recognise that, at some stage, there will be a need to continue consultations on a mechanism for inclusion of state parties' proposals in the methodology, as provided for in the Verification Annex.

Given that to date only ten per cent of declared OCPFs have been inspected, Australia strongly supports increased inspections of these facilities. We are disappointed that the 2008 draft budget allows for only the same number of inspections next year as took place this year. Improving the coverage of OCPF inspections goes to the heart of the non-proliferation goals of the Convention.

We also look forward to agreement in the near future on measures to address the problem of late declarations and gratefully acknowledge the facilitator's efforts to achieve this outcome. Australia also supports the on-going work of the facilitator for transfer discrepancies which is aimed at clarifying and standardising trade declarations in order to reduce discrepancies. While conscious of the complexities of this issue, we should aim for a decision which will be clear and implementable.

Mr Chairman

Despite years of discussion in the industry cluster, regrettably negotiations stalled last year on establishing low concentration thresholds for declarations of Part A Schedule 2 chemicals. The absence of a decision on this issue continues to allow such facilities to be exempt from declaration and inspection by the OPCW. We strongly urge states parties to resume consultations on this important topic to bridge this verification gap and thereby reduce the proliferation risk posed by facilities manufacturing these highly toxic Schedule 2 chemicals in low concentrations.

Mr Chairman

Each year, the Conference has the essential task of considering and adopting the Organisation's program and budget for the next year. We welcome the fact that the Technical Secretariat's draft budget for 2008 is, for the third consecutive year, a zero-nominal-growth budget. Such fiscal discipline relies on states parties meeting their financial contributions in full and on time, and we strongly urge all member states to do so.

Mr Chairman

Australia is looking forward to the second review conference as an opportunity to review and further strengthen the operation of the Convention. We appreciate the excellent preparatory work accomplished thus far under the leadership of Ambassador Lyn Parker of the United Kingdom, who has my delegation's full support. We look forward to receiving the Director-General's forthcoming paper and applaud the work of the Scientific Advisory Board for the excellent contribution it is making to the preparations.

Among the topics of importance for Australia at the review conference are sequential inspections and terrorism. Australia regards sequential inspections as a cost- and time-saving measure for the OPCW and we encourage states parties that have not yet agreed to such inspections to do so. We believe that the role of the OPCW in raising barriers to chemical terrorism could be enhanced, including through the development of a chemical security framework. These topics will be included in a number of Australian national papers to be submitted for consideration by the review conference.

Mr Chairman

Recent years have seen strengthened cooperation and pooling of resources between the OPCW and states parties, as seen in the provision of training for new OPCW inspectors, the conduct of challenge inspection exercises, and the development of capabilities within the OPCW for the analysis of biomedical samples to support investigations of alleged use. The commitment, support and initiative of these stakeholders is commendable and should be continued.

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

Thank you Mr Chairman.