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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**STATEMENT BY DR ROBERT P. MIKULAK,
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AND THE HONOURABLE MR ANDREW C. WEBER,
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR NUCLEAR AND CHEMICAL AND
BIOLOGICAL DEFENSE PROGRAMS, AT THE
FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairman,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

I am pleased to be here once again among so many colleagues at the Fourteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. Our numbers here today demonstrate the importance and the strength of the Chemical Weapons Convention. I warmly welcome our new Chairman, Ambassador Vaidotas Verba of Lithuania, and look forward to working with him in the coming year. I have every confidence in his ability to skilfully guide us through our full agenda this week, and I pledge my own support and that of the U.S. Delegation to making this a productive and successful session. I also extend my deep appreciation to our outgoing Chairman, Ambassador Minoru Shibuya of Japan, and thank him for his dedication and exemplary service to this Organisation over the past year. In addition, I want to thank the Chairs of the Executive Council this year, Ambassador Oksana Tomová of Slovakia and Ambassador Jorge Lomónaco of Mexico, for their leadership and for the consensus recommendations now before the Conference. As we begin this Conference, I would like to warmly welcome Lebanon, Iraq, the Dominican Republic, and the Bahamas as the newest Member States since the Conference last met in December 2008.

Mr Chairman,

Since this is the last Conference at which he will be with us, I would like to pay tribute to an outstanding colleague, one who is a diplomat, a statesman, and a leader: Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter. Ambassador Pfirter came to the OPCW at a time of crisis for the Organisation. Through his deft leadership, keen management, and organisational and diplomatic skills, Ambassador Pfirter moulded the OPCW into a world-class international organisation. On behalf of the United States, I would like to thank Ambassador Pfirter for his distinguished service and dedication.



Due in no small part to Ambassador Pfirter, the OPCW is widely recognised for its effective multilateralism and its ability to work steadily toward the global elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. All of this has been done within the bounds of fiscal responsibility, as evidenced by his submission of the fifth consecutive zero-nominal-growth budget for our approval this week. It is no small feat that all of this takes place within a culture of cooperation and consensus building.

There is no better way to measure Ambassador Pfirter's success as Director-General than to recall the number and superb qualifications of the candidates who sought to succeed him. The high calibre of the candidates did not make easy work for the Executive Council, but the Council successfully rose to the challenge and fulfilled its mandate to recommend one candidate in a fair, open, transparent, and consensual manner. We particularly thank the Council's Chairman, Ambassador Jorge Lomónaco of Mexico, without whose hard work, guidance, and leadership the task would have been much more difficult. The Executive Council has recommended that this Conference appoint Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü of Turkey to be the next Director-General. The United States welcomes the Council's consensus recommendation and looks forward to this Conference's approval by acclamation of Ambassador Üzümcü's appointment.

Mr Chairman,

In addition to making a consensus recommendation for the next Director-General, the Executive Council has accomplished much over the past year, as evidenced by the many items for approval on our agenda this week. Another important consensus recommendation from the Council is for approval of the draft 2010 Programme and Budget. This fifth consecutive zero-nominal-growth budget is a major accomplishment. We congratulate Ambassador Pfirter on his efficient management and the entire Technical Secretariat for being able to meet all of the Organisation's core objectives. The United States looks forward to approving the draft 2010 Programme and Budget during our session this week.

After more than ten years of on-and-off deliberations on guidelines for low concentration thresholds for Schedule 2A and 2A* chemicals, the Executive Council finally reached a consensus recommendation at its October session on setting declaration thresholds for these chemicals. The United States fully understands that agreeing to this political compromise was not easy for some Member States, and we noted our own concerns when we agreed to join consensus on the decision in October. However, this decision represents a delicate compromise, and the United States encourages its adoption by the Conference during our session this week. With the conclusion of this long-outstanding issue, we call on all Member States to actively engage in resolving other long-outstanding issues related to strengthening and enhancing the Convention's non-proliferation verification regime.

Achieving universality is an important goal of this Organisation. The number of Member States has grown remarkably in the twelve years since the Convention entered into force. While the number of States not Party to the Convention continues to shrink, the task of encouraging them to join clearly represents significant challenges. All Member States, working together with the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat, should continue to engage in the outreach and assistance which have been so successful in signalling that being a part of this Convention is part of being a full member in the community of nations. The United States welcomes the draft decision on universality before us this week, and we will be pleased to approve it.

However, acceding to the Convention and joining this Organisation is only the beginning of the story, and not the end. Article VII of the Convention requires Member States to implement fully the provisions of the Convention in their laws, regulations, and procedures. Since the adoption of the action plan for Article VII in 2003, there has been notable progress in the number of Member States fully meeting their Article VII obligations. In particular, the United States welcomes the establishment and designation of national authorities during the past year by the Bahamas, Barbados, Comoros, Congo, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Iraq, and Lebanon. We urge the few remaining Member States which have not yet done so to establish and designate their National Authorities as rapidly as possible.

The United States recognises that the work to fully implement Article VII is far from done, as evidenced in the Director-General's annual report on Article VII implementation, which is before us this week. In responding to the Director-General's report, we as Member States must consider what more can be done to address the current situation and meet the goals of the Article VII action plan. As has become apparent since the adoption of the action plan, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Support, whether from the Technical Secretariat or Member States, is most effective when it is tailored to meet the individual circumstances of Member States. The United States stands ready to provide support and Article VII technical assistance to any Member State requiring it. We share a collective interest in seeing each member of this Organisation enact and implement comprehensive legislation and regulations. Whenever another Member State takes this important step, another gap is closed, and our collective security is enhanced.

We still have important work ahead of us this week. Intensive consultations on Article VII, as well as Article XI, have continued since the October session of the Executive Council. There are dedicated, hard-working facilitators for both of these consultations, and we hope that as work continues this week, we can achieve consensus.

Mr Chairman,

This certainly has been an important year for this Organisation, and we have an equally important year ahead with many challenges and opportunities. With an incoming Director-General, we face a critical period of transition that should be smooth, orderly, and transparent. There also will be a change-over in the senior management of the Technical Secretariat, and the United States believes that the overall structure and balance of senior management has served the Organisation well and should be maintained. Paramount consideration should be given to the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity, with due regard given to geographical representation, when filling senior management positions. As chemical weapons stockpiles are destroyed and the Organisation's focus transitions from disarmament to non-proliferation, the next Director-General and his senior management will need to re-align the Organisation's activities, personnel, and budget while maintaining the support of Member States.

With this transition to a greater focus on non-proliferation, all Member States also will need to work cooperatively to achieve an effective balance in the industrial verification regime, including that of the regime for other chemical production facilities. This regime was created by the negotiators of the Convention to capture a whole set of industrial facilities which were not Schedule 1, 2, or 3 facilities but which still potentially posed a significant risk. Some of these facilities could be suitable for producing chemical weapons or even contain an embedded chemical weapons production mobilisation capability. The framers of the

Convention understood this risk and did their best to create a verification regime for this category of industrial facilities. The regime is neither perfect nor complete, and it now falls to us to complete and perfect it. We should all look beyond inspection numbers and work together to achieve a regime that is focused on those facilities which pose the greatest risk. This should be one of the key tasks for the Executive Council in the coming year.

Another area which deserves greater attention is strengthening the Organisation's relationship with stakeholders and civil society, including industry and non-governmental organisations. In this context, we welcome the formation of the NGO Coalition which the Director-General has just mentioned in his statement. As part of this process, we believe that holding some meetings to which all stakeholders are invited, along the lines of the very successful Experts Meetings for the Biological Weapons Convention, would pay real dividends to our work. This engagement would complement the role of the Organisation as a forum for consultation and cooperation among Member States, and certainly this framework could and should be used to exchange experiences and discuss issues related to chemical safety and security. Such discussions, drawing on the input of all stakeholders, could very well lead to new ideas and concepts for the implementation of Article X and Article XI, which would serve to strengthen this Organisation.

Mr Chairman,

I have spoken about a number of important items on our agenda this week. We also will take up consideration of another fundamental goal of this Organisation: the total destruction of chemical weapons. To address the United States' contributions to this shared goal of the Organisation, it is my great pleasure to introduce the Honourable Mr Andrew Weber, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Chemical and Biological Defense Programs.

Thank you, Dr Mikulak.

Mr Chairman,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

I am pleased to join you today for the Fourteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. I assign great importance to the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the shared efforts of all of my colleagues here today. I have dedicated my career to making the world safer, protecting against weapons of mass destruction proliferation, and strengthening arms control regimes. I echo the comments made by my colleagues honouring this Organisation as a model for effectively addressing the threat of chemical weapons, and I compliment its achievements under the extremely able leadership of Director-General Rogelio Pfirter. I also add my voice to the enthusiastic support for Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, the nominee to be the next Director-General of the OPCW.

Mr Chairman,

Earlier this year, President Obama entrusted me to provide oversight and leadership of our domestic chemical weapons destruction programme. This is no small task, as the United States possesses the second largest chemical weapons stockpile in the world. The safe, effective, and environmentally-sound destruction of more than 27,000 metric tons of assorted chemical weapons is an enormous challenge. However, it is one that we have made significant strides towards accomplishing, and I am proud to report on these achievements.

We have met our 1%, 20%, and 45% treaty milestones.

To date, we have destroyed 67.6% of our Category 1 chemical weapons, which includes 85.3% of our chemical rockets, the destruction of 96.6% of our nerve agent, and destruction of all of our binary chemical weapons.

We have destroyed all of our Category 3 chemical weapons.

We have destroyed all of our former chemical weapons production facilities.

We have completed destruction operations at three of our facilities.

We have four destruction facilities currently operating at a cost of over USD one billion and two additional sites under construction.

To date, we have provided an estimated USD 20.5 billion for the destruction of chemical weapons in the United States of America.

Over the years, we have successfully addressed a wide range of safety and environmental concerns raised by local citizens living near our storage and destruction facilities and by state and local authorities.

We have made every effort to ensure that our chemical weapons are destroyed consistent with the Chemical Weapons Convention; safely, without harm to workers, people living near the facilities, or the environment; verifiably, under the eyes of OPCW inspectors; and as rapidly as feasible.

Mr Chairman,

Let me assure you that the Obama administration is fully committed to examining all possible options for accelerating our chemical weapons destruction activities even further, consistent with the Chemical Weapons Convention and its applicable safety, technical, and environmental requirements. In 2006, the United States reported that it expected to have only 66% of its stockpile destroyed by 2012. This is however a milestone we have now reached. We will continue to seek ways to accelerate the programme.

As an example, we are now intensively assessing the possible use of small-scale well-proven technologies to supplement the neutralisation technologies planned at our two sites under construction located in Pueblo, Colorado, and Blue Grass, Kentucky. We are consulting with members of the United States Congress and conducting outreach to the local citizens and stakeholders about this potential new destruction strategy. We hope to have a decision on this strategy soon, and will keep you and the OPCW fully informed.

The United States understands our obligations under the Convention, and we are fully committed to meeting the Convention's objectives, including verified destruction of 100% of our stockpile as rapidly and as safely as possible. We are also committed to proactive disclosure of our chemical weapons destruction programme, including schedule and cost data, so that Member States can evaluate our efforts for themselves. To that end, we have

provided: 90-day reports for the past two-and-a half-years which track our progress made in three-month intervals; informal destruction presentations at every informal meeting of the Executive Council on chemical weapons destruction to offer frank and honest information on our programme, and one which I am pleased to provide here tomorrow at 2 pm; and site visits to our facilities, which allow an opportunity for representatives to observe the enormity and technical complexity of ongoing destruction efforts firsthand.

The United States will continue to provide the transparency measures necessary to ensure that the Member States of this Organisation have confidence in our domestic efforts.

Mr Chairman,

The United States views the threat posed by chemical weapons as a global concern and one that necessitates action by the international community. While we place a determined focus on destroying our stockpile of chemical weapons, we also contribute to the larger international destruction programme as well.

Through the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, which I have been able to spend much of my government career serving, the United States has contributed over a billion dollars to cooperative threat reduction programmes aimed at furthering the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Our projects in Russia range from the development of an analytical laboratory, to enhancing site security at Planovy and Kizner, to the destruction of former production facilities in Volgograd and Novocheboksarsk, and to the establishment of a chemical weapons destruction facility in Shchuchye. The latter commenced destruction operations in March of this year and continues to perform at an impressive pace. I offer my compliments to the Russian Federation for its continued efforts and to the international donor community who, through their generous contributions, reduced the global stockpile of chemical weapons. I'd like to congratulate the Russian Federation and especially Viktor Kholstov on the achievement of their 45% destruction deadline.

In addition to our partnership with the Russian Federation, the United States contributed over USD 45 million to assist the Republic of Albania in eliminating 16.6 metric tons of chemical weapons agents at Qaf Molle, destroying 100% of its stockpile in a verified manner.

It is my hope to convey to you the commitment of the United States of America to the shared vision of the Chemical Weapons Convention. It is our view that Member States ought to look within their borders to address their obligations under the Convention and look beyond their borders for opportunities to help meet the goal envisaged by the drafters of this Convention: a world free of chemical weapons.

With Dr Mikulak, I request that our statements be circulated as one official document to the Conference.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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