



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Nineteenth Session
1 – 5 December 2014

C-19/NAT.22
2 December 2014
ENGLISH only

NETHERLANDS

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JAN-LUCAS VAN HOORN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS TO THE OPCW AT THE
NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Madame Chairperson,

First I would like to thank the outgoing Chairman Ambassador Dr. Sa'ad Abdul Majeed Ibrahim for his excellent chairmanship.

My delegation is delighted to see you in the Chair of this Conference and assures you of our full support in the exercise of your function.

The Netherlands fully aligns itself with the statement pronounced by the Representative of the European Union. Further to that statement, I take this opportunity to make a few observations in a national capacity.

My delegation thanks the Director-General for his opening statement. For more than a year now, the most prominent issue on the agenda of this Organisation has been the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. Extraordinary measures were taken to deal with that extraordinary situation.

One of the most prominent features was the establishment of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission. On 30 September, the Joint Mission came to an end officially. My delegation wishes to express its deep appreciation for the work carried out by the staff of the Joint Mission, both from the Technical Secretariat and from the United Nations. They have done excellent work under very difficult and dangerous circumstances. I also pay tribute to the Special Coordinator, Sigrid Kaag, for the leadership she has shown in bringing the work of the Joint Mission to a successful conclusion. The removal of the priority chemicals from the Syrian Arab Republic and their subsequent destruction outside that country is an accomplishment for multilateral diplomacy.

As my delegation has made clear on previous occasions, however, there is still work to be done. And for the most part, that work is the responsibility of the Syrian Arab Republic. Syria has several obligations it still needs to fulfil.

The twelve Chemical Weapons Production Facilities (CWPFs) remain to be destroyed as well as the ricin-facilities declared more recently. Also, the Syrian Arab Republic has to provide more clarity regarding its declaration. It should take full advantage of the advice offered to it by the Declaration Assessment Team and remove all doubts about the correctness and



completeness of its declaration. We expect the Syrian Arab Republic to produce the additional document it has committed itself to without further delay.

The conclusions of the second report of the Fact-Finding Mission into the use of toxic chemicals in the Syrian Arab Republic do not leave room for misunderstanding: a toxic chemical was used systematically and repeatedly as a weapon.

My delegation reiterates its position that the use of any toxic chemical as a weapon is prohibited and a clear breach of the Convention, which should be firmly and unequivocally condemned by all members of the OPCW.

My delegation has taken careful note of the announcement by the Director-General that a third report of the Mission will be issued before the end of the year. Especially when that report re-confirms these clear breaches of the Convention and of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), they should not remain without consequences and those responsible should be held accountable.

The consultations about the Programme and Budget for 2015 can be characterised as smooth as well as transparent. We would like to thank the facilitators, Ambassador Eduardo Rodríguez Veltzé of Bolivia and Mr Domingos Alvim of Portugal and all others involved in the process for making it possible to conclude the consultations within the set time frame. We look forward to its adoption by consensus by this Conference.

The Council will have before it three decisions relating to the acquisition of an Enterprise Resource Planning System (ERP). In light of the expressed wish of many States Parties for an efficient running of the Organisation, my delegation supports the proposed draft decisions.

A draft decision that my delegation hopes this Conference will be able to adopt as well, after long and extensive consultations is the one concerning the rehiring of inspectors. We thank the delegations most closely involved in this exercise for their unrelenting efforts. In our view it is essential that the Technical Secretariat has staff with the expertise and experience to perform its duties in an efficient and professional manner. That is the Technical Secretariat's responsibility. But it is the responsibility of us, as States Parties to provide the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat with the resources to do so. The Netherlands therefore is in favour of approving the draft decision on rehiring of inspectors during this session of the Conference.

It is the conviction of this delegation that the OPCW should take the necessary steps to prepare itself for the future. The forward-looking process that we started in the run-up to and during last year's Third Review Conference needs follow-up action. We support the Director-General's initiatives to establish the Technical Secretariat as a knowledge centre on chemical weapons and to strengthen the ties with the academic world, industry and other representatives of civil society. We expect that at the next Executive Council we can have a road map agreed how to concretise all the subjects we discussed at the Review Conference.

I take this opportunity also to share with the other States Parties that the Netherlands has contributed to the efforts towards universal adherence to the Convention by raising the importance of accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention during a ministerial visit to Angola last July, and in September during the visit of the President of Myanmar to The

Hague. It is our pleasure to welcome the delegations of these countries and other States not Party to The Hague.

Finally I invite participants to our side-event tomorrow at lunch time in the Europe Room where the Director-General will be presented with a new legal commentary on the Chemical Weapons Convention.

In closing, I request that this statement be issued as an official document of this Conference and be published on the OPCW website and extranet.

Thank you.

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