



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

1. Mr Chairman, distinguished delegates.
2. It gives me great pleasure to welcome my dear friend, Ambassador Young-shik Song of the Republic of Korea, as Chairman of this Third Session of the Conference of the States Parties. I feel honoured to work under his inspired leadership. This is the third occasion on which I have the honour and privilege to address you as the Director-General of the OPCW. Although our Organisation is barely eighteen months old, its record is impressive, and its life has, from the very beginning, been extremely intense. Much has happened since May 1997, and I hope that you will agree that on balance all of us, both Member States and the Secretariat, can feel proud of these achievements. The time has now come, however, for us to start seeking ways to further improve the work and effectiveness of the Organisation, as well as striving to raise the credibility of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime which we are called upon to safeguard.
3. The effective and multilateral verification of compliance with the Convention's obligations has been the central task of the OPCW. In the area of chemical weapons, the regime established has allowed us to undertake the inspection of all the declared facilities in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. Eleven of the 59 declared chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) have already been certified as destroyed, and the conversion, for peaceful purposes, of another two CWPFs has been approved by the Conference of States Parties. At the moment we have under the Convention's verification regime: 48 chemical weapon production facilities; 34 chemical weapons storage facilities, containing between them eight million chemical munitions and more than 25,000 bulk containers filled with chemical agent; five operating chemical weapons destruction facilities; and 45 sites declared as containing old or abandoned chemical weapons.
4. While the verification activities carried out at declared CW-related facilities have so far not given cause for major concern, I think that it is, nevertheless, appropriate to note that a formidable task still lies ahead of us. All eight million chemical munitions, along with the chemical agent in the bulk containers, will have to be destroyed by the year 2007 if the Convention's timelines are to be observed - this will

by no means be an easy task. It is therefore essential that those States Parties which possess stockpiles of chemical weapons keep both the Member States and the Secretariat fully informed of their plans to meet this requirement.

5. During 1998 the Secretariat was able to step up its verification activities in the chemical industry. Contrary to some initial fears, this progressed largely without incident. More than 100 chemical industry-related facilities in 25 States Parties have so far been inspected. The level of cooperation extended to inspectors by the inspected States Parties and their chemical industries has been extremely high. Both sides have learned much during these first 18 months, and the chemical industry's initial apprehension has increasingly given way to a sense of mutual confidence.
6. It is an open secret that, for some national chemical industries and their respective governments, the first experience of industry verification was less than satisfactory, not because of the quality of the inspections which they received, but due to the uneven application of the verification regime across States Parties. In the interests of the Convention, it is imperative that this situation be redressed as soon as possible, and I believe that there are now good chances that this will happen. Nevertheless, I cannot escape a feeling of uneasiness in relation to what appears to be the temptation, on the part of some States Parties, to use this current situation to place artificial limits on the number of industry inspections.
7. The stated source of this dissatisfaction with industry inspections is the fact that United States of America, the State Party with the largest chemical industry in the world, has - due to legislative difficulties - not submitted declarations with respect to its chemical industry under Article VI of the Convention, and has not exposed its chemical industry to inspections. Fortunately, the primary cause of this problem, the absence of national implementing legislation for the Convention in the United States of America, has now been removed. In order to establish the "level playing field" foreseen in the Convention, it is, however, essential for the Government of the United States of America to take the necessary action to ensure that it can meet its obligations with respect to its chemical industry declarations at the earliest opportunity. I urge the Government of the United States of America, therefore, to take whatever action is necessary to achieve this goal soon. At the same time I also urge other States Parties with a concern in relation to this issue, in particular those which have so far borne the bulk of the industry inspections, to continue to demonstrate understanding and political generosity of spirit. In particular, I would ask them not to hold the verification regime of the Convention, and the OPCW Programme of Work and Budget, hostage to this issue.
8. It is also my sincere hope, and I am sure that of others, that, in the very near future, the United States of America will take action to rectify those aspects of its implementing legislation - in relation to the issues of challenge inspections, out of country analysis and low concentration thresholds - which, in our eyes and in the eyes of many, are not in accordance with the spirit of the Convention. My optimism in relation to this issue stems from the US Secretary of State, Dr Madeleine Albright herself, who, in her statement to the Stimson Centre in Washington DC, on 10 June

1998, recognised the dangers of Congress moving backward with the implementing legislation by adding provisions that are not consistent with the Convention, and that would diminish its effectiveness. Action on this matter is essential if we are to preserve the concept of equal treatment for all States which is enshrined in the Convention. A display of commitment by the US administration on this issue is therefore essential, if we are to avoid the risk of long-term damage to the Convention.

9. It is also becoming critically important today to close the remaining gaps in the verification regime, caused by the absence of declarations and by incomplete declarations. If the present situation is allowed to persist, confidence in the regime will begin to be eroded whereas, I am sure you will agree, it is our common task to work towards strengthening it. Let me announce now, by the way, that the Islamic Republic of Iran, which - since ratifying the Convention at the end of 1997 - has played a particularly active and valuable role in the Organisation, has just informed me through the Head of its delegation that Iran's initial declaration will be submitted to the Secretariat during this session of the Conference.
10. It is now time to turn our attention to ways and means of improving the relationship between the Member States and their Secretariat.
11. One way of sustaining, during the years to come, the progress which we have made during this first eighteen months is to address the issue of the flow of verification-related information between the Secretariat and Member States, and in particular between the Secretariat and the Executive Council. We all know that this is not an easy task. On the one hand, some Member States call for more transparency, whilst on the other hand, others refer to the risks involved, and to the possible political implications of an open and fluid exchange of information. You all know my stand on this question: full transparency for security-related issues, and full protection for industry-related information. But you also know to what extent my efforts have so far been countered by the negative reaction from some quarters, and how important it is, therefore, for the Executive Council to take a clear decision on this question.
12. The OPCW is now a fully-fledged international Organisation. It has emerged as the centrepiece of international efforts to prove that disarmament regimes can be viable, effective, and cost-efficient. To this end, the implementation of the Convention must remain essentially a cooperative endeavour. The relationship between the Member States and the Secretariat is continuously evolving. I perceive this relationship as one that requires the adoption of attitudes and approaches around the precepts of cooperation. It calls for the resolution of differences in a spirit of accommodation and rapprochement, and should remain aloof from quibbling, point-scoring, and collision courses. The full and appropriate implementation of the Convention imposes inescapable responsibilities on us all. This is a fact which we all understand and recognise. But if we are acting in the cooperative spirit of the Convention, should we allow narrow national interests - or even personal idiosyncrasies - to prevail, and thus to prevent the successful implementation of the Convention? Should we risk loosening this linchpin of international disarmament and non-proliferation, on whose success or failure the future of other such regimes depends to a critical extent?

13. In my view, it is particularly important for Member States to step back and concentrate much more on providing the Secretariat with the strategic policy guidance which it needs, and less on continuing to involve themselves in mundane day-to-day issues which are more properly the province of the management of the Secretariat. After all, ladies and gentlemen, my management board and I were appointed to manage the Secretariat on behalf of the Organisation. May I say, however, that I, in my turn, am willing to do my best to ensure that Member States are always consulted on issues of policy and substance, and are provided in a timely manner with all the information which they need to perform their function. Our common interest in the full and appropriate implementation of the Convention requires the establishment of an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust between the States Parties and the Secretariat.
14. As Chief Executive Officer, the Director-General must have flexibility in managing the Secretariat's resources, and must be able to take the operational decisions that are necessary to ensure its proper functioning, without the unnecessary imposition of straight-jackets of a micro-managerial nature. After all, every administrative or managerial decision made by me since my appointment appears to have been supported during the course of the thirteen sessions of the Executive Council. While it is clear that the Director-General has an obligation to abide by the requirements of the Convention and the policy of the governing bodies, his role cannot be restricted to simply following specific orders of a trivial nature. I believe that, as Director-General of the OPCW, I owe it to you to pursue the objectives of the Convention with determination, imagination and political vision, and to recommend policies and issues to the governing bodies for consideration and decision. In my capacity as Director-General, I have attempted to fully utilise the opportunities to advance the interests of our Member States. However, to meet all the challenges that clearly lie ahead, I believe that the Organisation must become more proactive. I do appreciate the support and encouragement which I receive from States Parties. I remain firm in my resolve to serve you faithfully and to meet your expectations. But, for that to happen, I need to enjoy your trust and confidence. I seek the earnest understanding of all Member States in further facilitating my role, and in enabling me to maintain our effective - though young - tradition of excellence.
15. It is my belief that we need to find a more effective way of undertaking the preparation and review of the OPCW Programme of Work and Budget. Member States rightly expect the Secretariat to draw up a draft programme of work and budget which accurately reflects the requirements that are necessary for the fulfilment of its mandate. In order to do this, however, the Secretariat, in its turn, needs clear guidance from Member States on a number of key issues, some of which still remain unresolved. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the Organisation still does not have sufficient historical data to be able to accurately forecast its needs for future years.
16. The result of this could be seen in the difficult and frustrating discussion on the proposed 1999 Programme of Work and Budget, which at the moment does not reflect the actual operational needs of the Secretariat. It is of course the absolute right of Member States to decide on the substance of the budget, but it is certainly not

cost-effective for the Executive Council and the Secretariat to devote the number of hours which - during the last two months - have been devoted to interminable arguments over the minutiae of the draft programme and budget. It is my firm belief, therefore, that it is necessary for us to proceed to a more practical budgetary mechanism - one which would enable Member States to satisfy themselves that the Director-General is operating within the general parameters of a budget determined by them, but one which, at the same time, will allow him the scope to manage the Secretariat in what he believes to be the most effective and efficient manner.

17. The credibility of the Convention's verification regime depends, largely, on the quality and dedication of the staff working for the Secretariat. In relation to this point, I would like to bring to the attention of the Member States the question of tenure for the staff of the Secretariat. All the staff in the Secretariat are aware that Member States are of the view that service in the Secretariat should be based on a concept of fixed-term appointments, and should not be seen as a long-term career based appointment. Nevertheless, it would also neither be in the interests of the Member States, nor conducive to the effective operation of the Secretariat, if the majority of staff were to leave at the end of their current three-year contract. It is, therefore, in all our interests to have a policy in this area which will ensure the effective operation of the Secretariat, while at the same time meeting the desire of Member States to ensure that there is a regular rotation of the staff of the Secretariat.
18. The development of a clear policy in this area is becoming increasingly urgent. By the Fourth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, which will take place in June of next year, only seven months away, the majority of the staff in the Secretariat will have less than one year to run on their current contracts. In the absence of a clear policy on contract renewal, many of them will have no choice other than to begin seeking employment elsewhere. The outcome of such a situation will not only be unpredictable, but will almost certainly not be in the best long-term interests of the Organisation. The development of such a policy is, of course, inevitably linked to the finalisation and adoption of the OPCW Staff Regulations.
19. In an attempt to facilitate decision-making on this matter, the management of the Secretariat has developed the first draft of a tenure policy, which it believes is consistent with the wishes of Member States. This draft, still in the form of an internal memorandum, has already been circulated to members of staff, and the principles outlined in it have just been endorsed by the Staff Council. For the benefit of Member States, and in order to assist them in their further deliberations on the OPCW Staff Regulations, copies of this internal information circular are available from the document counter.
20. As we continue to strive to build more confidence into the CWC regime, a fresh effort is needed to accelerate progress towards universality. Here, as in many other areas, the results achieved during the last year, while certainly not bad, certainly do not go far enough. You will recall that, at the last session of the Conference of the States Parties, twelve months ago, our membership stood at 102, and we were also able to welcome both the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation, the largest possessor of chemical weapons, to our community. Since then, a further 19 countries,

the most recent being Indonesia, which deposited its ratification on 12 November 1998, have either ratified or acceded to the Convention, bringing our current membership to 121. As mandated by Member States, my Deputy and I have been actively and consistently working to further widen the geographical scope of application of the Convention's regime. During my recent visit to the General Assembly of the United Nations, I met with senior officials from more than 40 signatory and non-signatory States, as well as from Member States.

21. During recent months, however, it has become increasingly clear to me that, despite our efforts, many smaller countries, particularly those which have neither chemical weapons nor significant chemical industries, remain largely unaware of the Convention or the potential benefits that would be derived from membership of our Organisation. I believe that this is an area where States Parties can be of particular assistance. Many of these countries have strong historical links with some of our States Parties. I would ask those States Parties to make an extra effort in the coming year to encourage those States not party to the Convention with which they maintain an active dialogue to come into the fold.
22. The African region remains the most under-represented in the OPCW. Whilst a number of African States have joined the Organisation during the last 12 months, it remains a fact that only 29 out of the 53 African States are States Parties to the Convention. I am aware that there are many reasons for this situation, not the least of which are the severe economic difficulties faced by many States in the region. Let me assure you that the Secretariat will continue to do everything in its power to assist those countries in Africa which have joined the Convention to meet their obligations. At the same time, we will maintain our commitment to encourage, and to the extent practicable assist, those States which have not yet joined to complete the legal and administrative processes which are necessary for them to ratify or accede to the Convention.
23. There are also a number of States in the Asia-Pacific region which are not parties to the Convention. One of these is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Despite our best efforts, we have not been successful in our attempts to establish effective communication with its government, and to begin a dialogue on the importance of that country's accession to the Convention. Needless to say, these efforts will continue in the future, and I will appreciate any assistance or suggestions which States Parties can offer in this area.
24. Another area of serious concern to me is the Middle East, where a number of States have yet to ratify or accede to the Convention. Not only did this region see the last large-scale use of these terrible weapons, but it is also a region where many believe that programmes to develop chemical weapons are very much a matter of fact. The quickest way to disprove such suspicions is, of course, for all States in the region to join the Convention as soon as possible.
25. During my recent visit to the General Assembly, I met with senior representatives from the key countries of concern in that region, i.e. Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan, Syria and the Yemen. For progress to be made, all sides must be

prepared to exercise vision, to move away from their current positions, and to consider the benefits of acceding to the Convention on its own merits. Israel and Egypt, in particular, can play a key role in finding a long-term solution to this problem, and can exert, as they have in other occasions, the leadership role which the international community expects of them. There are limits to the action that I, as Director-General, can take on this issue, and it is clear that, without the active support of those major players which have influence in this region, further progress is unlikely to be achieved.

26. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia must be encouraged to accede to the Convention. Accession by Yugoslavia can only enhance regional security, and I therefore urge Member States to assist me in my efforts to persuade the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to accede to the Convention at the earliest opportunity, in order to demonstrate its commitment to the world-wide elimination of this weapon of mass destruction. Should this happen soon, I am sure that all Member States of the OPCW will welcome the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as a full member of the OPCW.
27. The ultimate success of the CWC lies in driving home to the people of the world its impact on their daily lives. So far, our efforts have focused on creating awareness in official circles, and on sensitising them to the advantages of ratifying the Convention. These efforts have produced rewarding results that are reflected in the growing membership of the Organisation. We should maintain the momentum of these efforts to ensure the universality of the Convention. Parallel, and perhaps equally vigorous, efforts should now be launched to reach the citizens of the world beyond those official circles. The contribution of every individual is essential for the true achievement of the object and purpose of the Convention, for the achievement of the goals of the OPCW, and for the remarkable accomplishments in which we proudly share. We cannot afford to ignore this any longer.
28. The work of the OPCW goes beyond the mere dismantling, destruction and conversion of chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities. The CWC regime is a disarmament regime. It is a confidence-building regime. It is a non-proliferation regime. It is a non-discriminatory regime. It is a regime that encourages the exchange of chemical technology. It is a regime that offers numerous other benefits. These messages need to permeate to people at all levels, in all walks of life, and in all parts of the globe.
29. We have to recognise NGOs as a potent force, growing in importance and making positive contributions to national and international disarmament and non-proliferation programmes. There is a clearly identifiable role for the NGOs in the CWC regime. The very diversity of the Convention's range of concerns makes it imperative for us to harness the considerable potential of NGOs to help States to transcend any fears which they may harbour about joining and implementing the Convention. We are already working with a few NGOs, and I look forward to establishing lasting and harmonious relationships with many more. I am sure that the Member States of OPCW will echo my call when I assure NGOs that the OPCW will seek and find appropriate and positive ways of cooperating with them.

30. At the opening of the Third Session of the Conference of the States Parties, let me therefore appeal to the media and the NGOs for an appropriate contribution to make this pilot disarmament regime a great success.
31. Considerable progress has been made in laying the foundations necessary to ensure continuing progress in the area of technical cooperation and assistance. Details of our efforts in this area are summarised in Part II of the status of implementation report to the Eleventh Session of the Executive Council (EC-XI/DG.11, dated 13 August 1998). It is my firm intention to continue to build on this solid foundation during the coming year. I ask Member States to also devote further efforts to ensuring that they are in full compliance with their obligations with respect to this important part of the Convention.
32. Those Member States which participate in export-control regimes such as the Australia Group may also wish to consider how they might contribute further to the achievement of the long-term aim of the Convention, which is not only to ensure a world free from chemical weapons, but also to ensure the free movement of chemicals between States Parties and to encourage the future development of chemistry for peaceful purposes.
33. Before closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the retiring Chairman of the Conference of the States Parties, H.E. Ambassador Simbarashe Mumbengegwi of Zimbabwe; the retiring Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, H. E. Ambassador Bjorn Barth of Norway; and the first Chairman of the Executive Council, H. E. Ambassador Prabhakar Menon, as well as the current Chairman of the Executive Council, Mr Krzysztof Patulej of Poland, for all their valuable support along our way.
34. Finally, I would like to make an important announcement. During the summer I indicated that it was my intention, after further consultation with Member States, to designate the first OPCW laboratories. I am pleased to announce that, on the basis of their compliance with the criteria established by the Conference of the States Parties at its First Session (C-I/DEC.61) and of their performance in the first three proficiency tests, the following seven laboratories are hereby appointed as part of the OPCW verification regime:
  - (a) Laboratory of Analytical Chemistry Research Institute of Chemical Defence (China);
  - (b) Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (Finland);
  - (c) GSRDC-4 Laboratory Agency for Defence Development (Korea);
  - (d) TNO-Prins Maurits Laboratory (the Netherlands);
  - (e) Swedish Defence Research Establishment, FOA, Division of NBC Defence (Sweden);
  - (f) Defence Procurement Agency, NC-Laboratory Spiez (Switzerland);and

(g) Army Materiel Command Treaty Laboratory of APG Edgewood Area (USA)

35. I hope that you will all join me in wishing these first successful laboratories well in their future endeavours to provide the Organisation with the analytical support which it needs. Now that I have taken this step, I believe that it is essential for the Executive Council to give its attention to those issues raised in the Secretariat's recent paper on this issue entitled "A Review of the Status of Analytical Support for OPCW Verification Activities" (S/81/98\*, dated 5 November 1998).
36. Let me finish on this positive note, by thanking you for your attention, and by wishing us all a fruitful session of the Conference.

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