



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

First Special Session

C-SS-1/DG.7
21 April 2002
Original: ENGLISH

**STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
AT THE SPECIAL SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
21 APRIL 2002**

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

1. Back in 1997, when I decided to accept the request of the Brazilian Government to submit my candidature for the position of Director-General of the OPCW, I considered it, and I still consider it, an honour to be granted the unique opportunity to contribute to the first EVER TRULY global attempt to abolish an entire category of weapons of mass destruction.
2. But more than anything, I decided to run for the post of Director-General because the Chemical Weapons Convention represents the international community's biggest ever achievement in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. It is the first – and only – truly non-discriminatory multilateral disarmament treaty in existence – it is a treaty which places equal responsibilities on, and gives equal rights to, all States Parties.
3. Countries possessing chemical weapons that embraced the Chemical Weapons Convention have been divesting themselves of those travesties of history because they are assured that stockpiles of those weapons existing elsewhere are also being destroyed, under a stringent verification regime. The Convention establishes no special treatment for countries with a large chemical industry. Developing countries, when they declare themselves ready to enhance international security by joining the Organization, have, in their vast majority, little understanding of chemical weapons; yet, they immediately see the benefit in participating, through the greater access to technology and technical assistance to which they become entitled. Indeed, the Convention declares itself to be in favour of the broadest possible cooperation among States Parties in respect of peaceful uses of chemistry. Furthermore, the Convention requires us all to make every effort to extend its regime universally – with no exceptions. As a result, during my first five years as Director-General, no Member State was considered “more equal” than others. And I have never subscribed to the theory that “equality” is proportional to the size of any one state's budgetary contribution.

4. Those were the promises inherent in the Convention – as I saw them at the time, and as I continue to see them today. That was the basis of the “vision” that I brought to the Organisation on my very first day on the job. That was the vision that was amply clear to all, and not challenged by anyone, when my term was extended by acclamation in May 2000, one year ahead of schedule. That was the vision that I vowed to uphold back in 1997, and that is the vision that I intend to keep intact as long as I remain Director-General. Yet – if I am to believe the various allegations of my “ill-conceived initiatives” – that vision is now being rejected by some members of this Organisation.
5. Of course I was always aware that the job of Director-General of the OPCW would not be an easy one. I knew that I was going to face considerable pressures, and that my integrity might be put to the test. I realised that immediately after I was elected Director-General, when I had to fight in order to put together a team of trusted colleagues, on the basis of their competence and ability, and not of the political pressures brought to bear upon me. I realised this again shortly thereafter, when one Member State tried – unsuccessfully – to force me to provide it with copies of each and every inspection report. I realise it even more deeply now, when one Member State is leading the campaign for my immediate departure from the OPCW, allegedly because of my “management style”. Yet, I am as convinced now as I was then, that the Chemical Weapons Convention will survive only if the principles of genuine multilateralism, true fairness, and equal treatment are preserved. And those are the principles that I have been trying to uphold every day of the last five years.
6. I am truly proud of the OPCW’s achievements in those five years. I am proud of the staff of the Secretariat. Member States should be grateful to every one of those 500 hard-working professionals for what the OPCW has been able to accomplish. I am proud of the unprecedented growth in the membership of the Organisation – which is the clearest evidence of the respect for the OPCW amongst its States Parties, as well as amongst the ever-dwindling number of States not party. I am proud that we have established a sound and impartial verification regime, and that we are fortunate to have inspectors who have placed impartiality, decency, and ethics above everything. Their loyalty is to the Organisation, and not to individual Member States. I am proud of the more than 1,100 inspections we have conducted in more than 50 Member States; and of the non-discriminatory and unbiased way in which we conducted them. I am proud of the proposal which is now before the Executive Council for the provision of effective and timely assistance to victims of chemical weapons attacks, including attacks by terrorists. And I am proud of the modest, yet extremely significant, effort we put into our international cooperation programmes, which, I firmly believe, are critical to the struggle against the proliferation of chemical weapons. I have faith that the OPCW will ultimately succeed in its mission to completely destroy the world’s chemical weapons arsenals. As I have stated before, once its disarmament mission has been accomplished, the OPCW should become an “organisation for the promotion of chemistry for peaceful purposes”, in full accordance with the spirit of the Convention.
7. Against the backdrop of these achievements, I can only see the attack launched against me as an attack on the OPCW itself, and, in particular, on those key principles which have been guiding my work, and which have become the hallmark of my “management style”. Indeed, the unprecedented effort that has been put into ensuring

my dismissal suggests the intention to change much more at the OPCW than the personality of its Director-General, or his “management style”. And this would explain why my appeals for dialogue and cooperation have been repeatedly rejected. Contrary to the path of stonewalling and hostility which my critics have chosen, I still believe that dialogue and cooperation offer the best way out of any crisis, including the current one, for the benefit of the Convention and all States Parties. Let me repeat again that, even at this very late stage, and in spite of the many slanderous remarks that have been made about me in the course of the last few months, I still stand ready and willing to follow the path of dialogue and cooperation.

8. No one can disregard the fact that the OPCW works, and works well. And it has the respect and support of the vast majority of its 145 States Parties. The OPCW has become too strong to be destroyed from the outside. This may explain the current attempt to implode it from within, together with its underlying principles of fairness and non-discrimination. The culture of non-discrimination and equal treatment that I have fought hard to establish in the Secretariat is now under attack. That culture is being challenged by one of silent and unquestioning obedience to one or a few “major contributors”. If this “new culture” is to prevail, then those members of staff who act with integrity and are committed to fairness will have to be the first to go – starting with the Director-General.
9. Those of you who have been closely following the work of the OPCW certainly realise what it is about my management style that appears to be causing discomfort in some quarters. I could have been just a figurehead, as some Member States wanted. Instead I have chosen, as the Convention requires, to take my responsibilities seriously, amongst other things by being actively involved in the everyday work of the Organisation. I refused to defer to those individuals who some Member States want to be in charge.
10. Ironically enough, because I have stood in the way of decisions that would have established a double standard in the Organisation, I am now accused of being biased. What is bias for some, is in reality my commitment to “equal treatment for all”. I insist that the scope of access for our inspectors should be the same in all countries. I also insist that States Parties cannot pick and choose those areas which inspectors may or may not verify. I insist that the verification effort, in full accordance with the Convention, should be aimed at inspectable facilities, rather than at certain countries. I insist on measures that will ensure that OPCW inspectors verify those weapons and equipment which the OPCW must verify, rather than merely those which might be volunteered by a State Party for verification. In other words, I trust, but I also verify, everywhere, in full accordance with the Convention. I do criticise attempts to water down the verification regime. I do criticise the continuing attempts of a small number of States Parties to stonewall long-awaited solutions to critical issues out of perceived national preferences. And I am now facing this current ongoing ordeal because I should not, perhaps, have drawn the attention of other Member States to these matters, as the Convention requires.
11. What else about my management style is not liked that might require changing? Let us examine the list of my “ill-conceived initiatives”.

12. I am blamed for seeking Iraq's membership of the CWC, even though this effort is in full accordance with the decisions of the UN Security Council, and with the mandate issued to me by all of you, to ensure the Convention's universality WITHOUT EXCEPTION. Does dissatisfaction with my actions mean that the universality of the Convention should include some countries, but not others, not Iraq, for example?
13. I am blamed for seeking to establish, in full accordance with Article X of the Convention, a credible system to protect States Parties from an attack, including a terrorist attack, with chemical weapons. Should as many as two thirds of Member States remain defenceless against such a threat, while the ability of a small number of other States to protect themselves and their allies remains robust?
14. I am blamed for holding out the OPCW's hand to the international community in its fight against terrorism, simply because the OPCW has unique expertise in chemical weapons to offer in this regard. Is that a crime? Or is it a compassionate and rational offer, on the basis of my assessment of the very real contribution which the OPCW, in close consultation with other international organisations, will have to make in the post September 11th context?
15. I am now reproached for fully funding in 2001 one single international cooperation programme which amounted to just 0.4 percent of the OPCW budget for that year, yet which meant a great deal to the many developing countries. This programme represents the vital link between disarmament and development that has been recognised and endorsed by the United Nations. Do Member States seek to further reduce the international cooperation and assistance programmes at the OPCW, which at present account for a meagre 6% of its budget?
16. Finally, I am blamed for wishing to keep all States Parties informed of progress in the destruction of Russia's chemical weapons, and for suggesting that Russia's utilisation of international assistance be scrutinised by the international community. If those are my ill-conceived initiatives, then I plead guilty as charged.
17. I believe that any abandonment of such sound policies will have extremely serious consequences for the Organisation and for you, the Member States. This is why I insisted that my fate should be decided by all of you, the States Parties, and not by one, or a few "major contributors", which, in supporting the US draft decision, appear to share the US perception of my "errors of judgement".

Mr Chairman,

18. I will be frank – a major blow is being struck against the OPCW. And the perpetrators would have preferred it to take place behind closed doors. They were absolutely confident that they could move any piece on the global chessboard *ad libitum*, without consultation or explanation to the rest of the world and, in particular, to the rest of the Organisation's membership. This is why, in flagrant violation of the letter, not to mention the spirit, of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Brazilian Government was unilaterally approached with the demand that I resign and be "reassigned". Much later, I was approached unilaterally with ultimatums to step down. And the campaign did not stop, even when a clear majority of the 41 members of the Executive Council declined to support the US "no-confidence motion" requesting me to stand down.

19. As I wrote to your Foreign Ministers, there is a more important and fundamental point to consider. Much more than the person of the Director-General – and, please, forget Jose Bustani now – or even the OPCW itself, is at stake here. No Director-General, of any international organisation in history, has ever been dismissed during his or her term of office. Moreover, no Director-General should be dismissed without due process, without any evidence of malfeasance being produced by the accuser, and without, at the very least, an open discussion and an independent investigation of the allegations. Those of you who have been following developments at the OPCW know that I have committed no crime. You know that the so-called allegations against me are trumped up charges. You know that there is no mismanagement of the OPCW's budget, and that every cent has been spent on activities that were properly budgeted for. The latest report by the External Auditor – on the 2001 financial year – is the clearest possible indication of this. It will be formally issued in the next few days, but has already given us a perfectly clean bill of health, once again, for 2001. You know that my offer of a full and independent inquiry into my performance as the Director-General was rejected because such an inquiry would simply expose the allegations as absolutely unfounded, and confirm that there has never been any wrongdoing. The US draft decision, in fact, establishes a precedent whereby the Director-General or Secretary-General of any international organisation can be removed from office at any time during his or her tenure, simply because one Member State, with or without other “major contributors”, doesn't like his or her “management style”, or has “lost confidence” in him or her, whatever this might mean. And to establish such a precedent within an organisation such as the OPCW, which is not in the public eye of the international community as are some of its cousins, is easy. This is what this Conference is about. These are the choices you face.
20. Now let me say a few words to those who are concerned about the OPCW's survival, should one very important Member State not pay its budgetary contribution to the Organisation. I fundamentally disagree with those who may think that it is better to surrender the OPCW to that Member State, than to maintain a truly multilateral OPCW at minimal additional cost. I will never agree that the façade of multilateralism is more important than its substance. This would not be a compromise – it would be capitulation. Why? I will explain. This Member State's contribution to this year's OPCW budget is 12 million euros, six million of which have already been paid. Is six million euros too high a price to pay for ensuring the independence and effectiveness of the Organisation? Is six million euros (or even 10 or 12 million euros, should other like-minded Member States also refuse to pay their dues) too high a price to pay to avoid ousting the sitting head of an international organisation, something never yet attempted in international law? Is the OPCW's independence this cheap?
21. Now, let me say a few words about the immediate future. Those who believe that, if I leave, the Organisation will be flooded with money, are sadly mistaken. The OPCW has already suffered three years of underbudgeting. As a result, in 2003, just to keep up with the significant increase in the verification workload determined by yourselves, we will have to recruit 47 staff. To pay for this, the 2003 budget will have to be increased by more than 20 percent. This increase is simply non-negotiable. In full knowledge of this, major contributors have already made it clear that they will not agree to more than a 10 percent increase in 2003, which is not enough even to pay

the salaries of existing staff. As a consequence, next year, regardless of the identity of the Director-General, you will see a shrinking, not an expanding, OPCW, and an unavoidable reduction in its staff. And this will be the next step towards the Organisation's demise, because funding is being determined by political agendas, and, in a few capitals at least, the OPCW seems to be a very low priority.

22. Yes, there is too much at stake here – for the OPCW, for other international organisations, and for the international community. It is time to rise to the challenge. It is time to set priorities as they are perceived by all of you, and not just by a few so-called “major players”. This is why I refused to resign under pressure from a small handful of Member States. I did so in order to give you all the opportunity to make your choice – to determine what future, if any, multilateral organisations have in this increasingly dangerous, complex, and unstable world.
23. You may be surprised to hear that, had I resigned and agreed to walk away, then my executioners would have granted me a “dignified” departure, and that my accomplishments over five years of stewardship would even have been applauded. However, let me tell you: I do not need a hero's departure. But if I do go – something that is now in the hands of all of you – it will be with honour. I will have been faithful to the principles of integrity by which I have tried to live my professional and personal lives – principles which are shared by my family, my foreign service and my country's foreign policy. Please understand that, in refusing to resign, I chose the most arduous of the two paths. One that brought threats, risks, stress, and insecurity, but which I chose to follow. First of all, because that is the call of my conscience. Secondly, because the bulk of my 36 years in the Foreign Service have been devoted to the elaboration and strengthening of multilateral instruments, without which, I firmly believe, peace and harmony among nations will not be achieved. I therefore refuse to resign, NOT because I want to cling to my position; but because, in not resigning, I will be preserving the right of each one of you – of even the smallest Member State amongst you – to publicly state your position on this very serious issue and to conscientiously take responsibility for your decision. I consider it my duty to give you all, and not only the most powerful amongst you, the right to oust me.
24. Although this unprecedented, ruthless and arbitrary procedure is taking place away from the public limelight, beneath the low skies of the subdued city of The Hague, the decisions to be taken here over the next few days will leave an indelible mark on the history of international relations. I hope that all of you, the Member States, will confront this historic challenge in full awareness of the implications of your decision. The choices that you make during this session of the Conference will determine whether genuine multilateralism will survive, or whether it will be replaced by unilateralism in a multilateral disguise.
25. Excellencies, the responsibility for this decision rests with you.

Thank you.