



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

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**OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL
TO THE FIRST SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES
PARTIES TO REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE
CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Let me at the outset express my great satisfaction at seeing you preside over our deliberations on this unique occasion for the Convention and the OPCW. Under your able chairmanship, and with the help of the distinguished members of the General Committee, the success of this Conference is assured.

Mr Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is a great honour for me to address the First Review Conference on the Chemical Weapons Convention. Ten years ago, the drafters of the treaty wisely foresaw the need for States Parties to gather and jointly review the operation of the Convention with a view to assessing the process and providing recommendations for the future direction of the implementation process.
2. However, the exercise we are about to tackle goes beyond a normal review of the operations of a disarmament agreement. From our common deliberations, a renewed sense of commitment must emerge. In the past few months, preparatory work has shown that there is indeed a vast area of convergence among Member States, but that, at the same time, there remain issues that require further efforts to forge a common understanding and a shared vision.
3. This is the first review of the sole multilateral instrument banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. In this sense, we must recognise that our task will be particularly demanding; our responsibilities, great. We are expected to evaluate the implementation of the Convention, taking stock of the experiences and lessons learned six years after the entry into force of the Convention.
4. We should make these assessments in such a way as to protect and preserve the Convention and the institutional machinery created in order for its mandate to be achieved. Ultimately, I am sure, we will all reiterate our original commitment, and reaffirm the continued validity of a global ban on chemical weapons.



5. The Convention we are reviewing and the regime it establishes and maintains can be considered a success story. The OPCW is fully operational, a complex verification regime is in place, the destruction process is moving ahead, and international cooperation and assistance programmes and activities are being implemented on a regular basis. But such collective success cannot be taken for granted. It has to be confirmed each day, at every destruction facility, in every inspection report, and during all our regular meetings—in other words, through the myriad of actions and activities that in one way or another stem from the Convention.
6. As Director-General of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW, I consider it my responsibility to review some of the crucial topics that are to be discussed, and to provide my considered view on the best way to move ahead, as the OPCW enters a decisive phase in its young history.
7. The Convention prohibits hideous means of mass destruction and aims to completely preclude the possibility of their use. Such a lofty goal rests on a number of conditions. The first is that those Member States that have acknowledged possessing them fully engage in the destruction activities stipulated in the Convention.
8. The second condition is that our instrument becomes universal. The stockpiles declared to the OPCW are being safeguarded by us and are being destroyed. Five Member States have backed their political commitment by taking the actions needed to get on effectively with their destruction campaigns. However, a number of states have yet to accede to the Convention, and this is causing serious concern. Their chemical weapons capabilities are still undeclared and unverified, and are not being eliminated under international verification. This Review Conference should send a clear and strong message to these States not Party, stressing the need for and the desirability of their early adherence to the Convention.
9. Our Convention and this Conference do not operate in a vacuum. As proven by recent events, the possession of weapons of mass destruction continues to be at the heart of international peace and security. Even though the largest existing stockpiles are a legacy of the Cold War, chemical weapons have also proliferated outside this context.
10. Thus, contrary to what could have been assumed a few years ago, implementation of the Convention is not simply a clean-up operation on the unwanted heritage from a bygone era. Rather, the effective implementation of the Convention is an essential component of today's security agenda.
11. The Convention has a unique mandate. It is, indeed, an instrument of multilateral and non-discriminatory disarmament. It also comprises a non-proliferation dimension through its verification regime and, at the same time, it foresees effective measures for international cooperation as well as assistance and protection against the use or threat of use of chemical weapons.
12. Each of these distinct but mutually reinforcing areas presents specific problems and challenges that we must identify swiftly and tackle with resolve. Disarmament comes first. Chemical weapons destruction activities cannot wait. The destruction of Category 1 chemical weapons is well underway in four possessor States Parties, and

will soon begin in the fifth. We must congratulate ourselves for the clear commitment shown by all possessor States Parties to destroy these weapons.

13. It has become apparent, however, that there are considerable obstacles to the timely completion of the destruction programmes. These are caused not only by financial constraints, but also by technical problems. The process needs to continue and the Technical Secretariat remains available at all times to cooperate with Member States in addressing the outstanding problems.
14. The biggest practical challenge facing the OPCW in this area is how to deal with the projected increase in activity in national chemical weapons destruction programmes beginning this year. As new facilities come into operation, we will have to assess the current inspection model to determine whether changes or adaptations should be introduced to preserve the viability of the entire process within the framework of the Convention.
15. Another important issue for Member States to consider is the impact of developments in science and technology on the comprehensive nature of the ban imposed by the Convention. Some of these trends have been identified by the Scientific Advisory Board. In a separate note I have presented a few recommendations based upon the Board's findings.
16. As I mentioned earlier, the Convention established a complex non-proliferation regime that is intended to prevent the spread of chemical weapons stocks and capabilities, controls and prohibits the transfer of scheduled chemicals, and stipulates the enactment of national implementation measures. Let there be no misunderstanding. The non-proliferation dimension of the Convention works in the interest of all the States Parties and, in my view, particularly of those whose economies are either developing or in transition. Indeed, the vast majority of our Member States do not have the capabilities or resources to protect themselves adequately against the threat of chemical weapons. Therefore, it is in their primary interest to ensure that existing arsenals are destroyed, but, most importantly, that new arsenals do not come into existence.
17. The international verification regime must increase confidence that Member States are pursuing chemical activities for peaceful purposes, but it cannot do this by itself. That is why national implementation is so important to the success of the chemical-weapons ban. In fact, the regime set forth in the Convention is a combination of international norms and national measures. Much to our regret, we must admit that considerable improvements are still required before the regime can be said to be fully operational. We are all conscious of the practical difficulties faced by many States Parties in complying with these complex and time-consuming obligations. Nonetheless, we must persevere in our efforts to encourage and support national implementation.
18. Industry inspections are key, as the credibility of the Convention rests on its ability to detect any deviation towards the development or production of chemical weapons. Here I wish to praise the chemical industry for its cooperation worldwide. Without it, our task would simply be impossible. Chemical industrialists have shown vision and a sense of civil and political responsibility that cannot be underestimated. I hope that

we will continue to enjoy their invaluable cooperation in the years to come. It is clear that the permanent involvement of the private sector is required in order for the Technical Secretariat to conduct effective inspections of the chemical industry, which is undergoing rapid transformations.

19. My remarks on the verification system under Article VI of the Convention would not be complete if I did not touch upon the regime governing other chemical production facilities (OCPFs), which produce discrete organic chemicals. The experience of the past five years has clearly shown that, among the vast number of declared OCPFs, some are highly relevant to the object and purpose of the Convention, producing as they do chemicals that are structurally related to certain Schedule 1 chemicals. Such facilities might need just a few changes to their equipment and process configurations to be converted for chemical weapons purposes. Others might need no changes at all.
20. In my view, for the inspection regime to acquire the necessary credibility and impact in terms of actual, and not just apparent, security, the number of OCPF inspections should increase significantly to a level that would provide overall confidence in the verification regime. This is a very important matter, on which we must strive for consensus. I would suggest that we avoid creating artificial dichotomies among types of facilities to be inspected. Schedule 1 facilities are, and always will be, a priority. Nevertheless, we must avoid falling into the trap of a verification regime autistically focused on a handful of well-known installations, while other relevant facilities are left completely unchecked.
21. Let this Review Conference be an opportunity to strengthen the unity of Member States in their resolve to make use of the entire verification regime as agreed upon in the Convention. Since entry into force, no request for a challenge inspection has been submitted to the OPCW. While this type of inspection has become fairly normal procedure in some regions such as Europe, where it normally applies to instruments on the control of conventional forces, we must remain aware of the sensitivity of the matter and the great responsibility and caution this particular provision calls for. It is up to Member States to decide whether and when a challenge inspection is to be invoked for the purpose of clarifying a concern about possible non-compliance. It would thus be inappropriate for me to speak in favour of it or to urge Member States to avail themselves of the possibilities offered by the Convention. I only wish to recall that challenge inspections are part of the array of possibilities included in the Convention at the disposal of the OPCW and in this sense we must guarantee that all measures are being taken within the Technical Secretariat to maintain the high degree of readiness that is necessary to conduct them, should Member States so decide.
22. Assistance and protection provisions have acquired a higher priority among a large number of Member States. The present security crisis in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf area have prompted some State Parties to request the assistance of the Technical Secretariat in the development of national capabilities to protect themselves against the possible use of chemical weapons. While the Secretariat has provided the requested assistance to the best of its abilities, recent developments have underlined the limited ability of the Secretariat to supply advice and support. To a considerable extent, this ability depends on the Member States themselves. This situation is the result of a deliberate choice made during the negotiations on the Convention, and we have to abide by it. Any action by the Secretariat in this connection must stay within

the clearly defined limits set by the Convention. That being said, the role of the Secretariat in terms of coordination and facilitation can be extremely useful in emergencies. The availability of adequate resources lies at the heart of any assistance programme and, at the moment, the extent of that availability depends almost entirely on the Member States. Thus, while it is indispensable, the ability of the Secretariat to respond to requests for assistance in the present circumstances remains limited.

23. The international-cooperation programmes of the OPCW have evolved from a set of small-scale projects into a more mature programme portfolio. Three main axes guide the structure of our programmes: the facilitation of scientific and technical exchanges among States Parties in relation to peaceful chemical activities; capacity-building in relation to the management of chemicals for peaceful purposes; and capacity-building directly related to the implementation of the provisions of the Convention. This overall structure allows us to provide Member States with effective and legitimate incentives to join the Convention. In my view, future international cooperation programmes should allow for a synergy to be achieved between economic and technological development, on the one hand, and the full implementation of the Convention on the other.
24. The proportion of the budget allocated to international cooperation has increased. We now have to live up to the expectations of Member States and deliver effective international-cooperation programmes within the parameters they have set for us. Our approach to international-cooperation programmes involves seeking to increase the appeal of the Convention to the remaining States not Party, so that they see the benefits of joining the Convention. At the same time, these programmes should assist States Parties in implementing their obligations under the Convention, thus creating a virtuous circle where we all win.
25. The review you are about to commence will not be limited to the operation of the treaty but will inevitably extend to the functioning of the Technical Secretariat. I need not remind this gathering of the recent history of the OPCW and of the trial by fire we all went through a year ago. I think it is fair to say today that the OPCW has emerged stronger from that difficult period and is now moving ahead on all fronts. In that context it is worth mentioning that, in the past few weeks, an important decision in terms of OPCW personnel policy was made by the Executive Council. The recent decision on a maximum tenure of seven years for OPCW staff confirms the will of Member States to make this a non-career organisation. I will implement this measure as mandated by the Policy-Making Organs in a fair and transparent manner. This will not be easy, as it will require the introduction of a phasing-in mechanism that will have to reconcile the turnover rate defined by Member States with the operational requirements of the OPCW and the financial resources available to it.
26. This was no easy decision for Member States to take, and it will certainly not be any easier to implement it. Rotation means that new talent joins the OPCW, but inevitably it also means that some of our highly esteemed colleagues will leave it. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute once again to all staff members of the OPCW, who, ever since its establishment and throughout its short and at times difficult history, have demonstrated the excellence, integrity, and dedication the Convention requires of them.

27. Any fair assessment of the operation of the Convention should not overlook the essential contribution OPCW staff have made during all these years. Almost six years after the entry into force of the Convention, the implementation of the tenure policy signals a new stage in the life of the Technical Secretariat, guided by the principles of transparency and effective management.
28. Certain management decisions are long overdue, and we are finally going to take them. I believe that a necessary starting point could be the approval of the Financial Rules of the OPCW. Their present interim status is not in line with the best management practices we all wish to see observed. It is by no means coincidental that, while we define our personnel policy, we will also begin phasing in result-based budgeting, starting with sections of the 2004 budget. This transition will be complex, as it involves a truly cultural change in the procedures and practices of the Technical Secretariat that will ultimately lead to significant improvements in terms of budget control and accountability.
29. Before I conclude, let me briefly refer to a matter that I deem important to the future of the OPCW. I envisage the consolidation of the OPCW as an open international organisation in constructive dialogue with other international bodies and with civil society as a whole. It is my conviction that although the OPCW is not in a legal sense part of the United Nations, its work requires a very close working relationship with the UN, not dissimilar to that enjoyed by other specialised agencies. Since coming into office, I have visited the UN headquarters three times and personally assured the Secretary-General of our willingness to give full meaning to the Relationship Agreement between both organisations. A case in point is our contribution to the fight against international terrorism through the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee, where we are actively involved as one of the international organisations whose activities relate to the control of the use of or access to nuclear, chemical, biological, and other deadly materials, in line with paragraph 7 of UN Security Council Resolution 1456 (2003).
30. The fight against international terrorism was not on the international agenda when the drafters of the Convention put the final touches to it. But it is now—and we must make sure that, within the provisions of the Convention, the international community can count on our full and unqualified support. The Convention can make a contribution in this area, especially since access to weapons of mass destruction has been actively sought by criminal groups. Effective implementation of the Convention, including the internal-legislation mechanisms it provides for, will make it much more difficult for these criminal groups to achieve their nefarious purposes.
31. Just as we have to be ready for new political challenges, we must also keep the latest the latest developments in chemistry and chemical-industrial production under constant review to make sure that they are adequately covered by the Convention.
32. The Convention was not established to become an obsolete instrument, and indeed, the drafters included a number of provisions to prevent this from happening. In this context we should make full use of the Scientific Advisory Board, which is there precisely to provide Member States with a balanced and scientifically sound point of reference.

33. Your presence here confirms the commitment of all Member States to a global ban on chemical weapons. We live in uncertain times, when emerging threats to international security put question marks over our collective future. The Chemical Weapons Convention can help reduce some of these uncertainties. It can reduce the shadow of the threat. We have the rare privilege and bear the unique responsibility of making this international agreement stronger and more efficient through our deliberations here in The Hague. Let us convey the message loud and clear that, in the fight against weapons of mass destruction, the overwhelming majority of the international community stands firmly united behind the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Thank you.

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