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**MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS
TO THE SECOND SPECIAL SESSION OF
THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
TO REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION
DELIVERED BY MR TIM CAUGHEY,
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AFFAIRS OF THE UNITED NATIONS
THE HAGUE, 7 APRIL 2008**

I am pleased to address this message of support to the Second Review Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. This important occasion offers an opportunity to reflect on the Convention's provisions, while taking account of key scientific and technological developments.

The Convention has an undisputed record as one of the world's most successful disarmament treaties. It now enjoys near-universal membership, with 183 States Parties encompassing 98 per cent of the global population.

The impact of this Convention has been momentous. Some twenty-seven thousand tonnes of chemical weapon agents have been destroyed. So have more than 2.9 million chemical munitions and containers. We must recognize this progress, and the positive role played by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The action plans on universality and national implementation, recommended by the First Review Conference in 2003, have been effective both in promoting adherence to the Convention and in assisting States Parties in its implementation. Yet, there are several States remaining outside the framework whose adherence would be critical to the success of the Convention. I urge all Governments that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention without delay.

Our efforts to build a world free of chemical weapons require that all States Parties adopt, enhance and strengthen the national implementation measures called for under the Convention.

All States Parties have the obligation to destroy their existing chemical weapons and production facilities. The possessor States must destroy their stockpiles completely before the final deadline of April 29th, 2012. I call on all possessor States, whether their stockpiles are large or small, to fulfil this solemn obligation.



One year ago, marking the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, States Parties declared that “its full, universal, effective and non-discriminatory implementation” will contribute further to international peace and security “by excluding completely, for the sake of all humankind, the possibility of the use of chemical weapons.”

I fully share this conviction, and assure you that the United Nations will work together with the OPCW and the international community to continue to promote universal adherence to the Convention and its full implementation.

Let us all reaffirm our common commitment to eliminate the dangers posed by chemical weapons. And let us redouble our efforts to build a world free from these instruments of mass destruction.

Your work over the next two weeks is integral to realizing this vision, and I wish you all success.

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