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ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION
OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

THIRD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE
STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE
CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

OPENING STATEMENT

BY

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OPCW Headquarters, The Hague
8 April 2013

Mr Secretary-General,
Mr Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

1. I convey to you my warmest welcome to the Third Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.
2. I congratulate Ambassador Krzysztof Paturej of Poland on his well-deserved election to chair this Conference and assure him of the full support of the Technical Secretariat.
3. The OPCW is honoured to welcome the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Ban Ki-moon. His presence among us today is a testament to his strong commitment to disarmament and to our work. “The world is over-armed, and peace is underfunded”: this has been his rallying call to the path of disarmament.
4. The Chemical Weapons Convention serves the goals of the Charter of the United Nations. Where the Charter declares its purpose as the pursuit of international peace and security, the work of the OPCW presents a concrete manifestation of this aspiration. The Convention has succeeded when disarmament in general has remained stagnant. Implementing the global prohibition on chemical weapons is a triumph of multilateralism. It has decisively advanced the cause of peace. We look forward keenly to the Secretary-General’s address to the Conference.
5. Review Conferences are meant to take stock and to set the long-term view. This Conference takes place at a particularly important

juncture. The success of the OPCW is evident in the 16 years of the operation of the Convention and the apparatus of its implementation. Today, 188 States are party to the Convention, and nearly 80% of all declared chemical weapons have been successfully destroyed. Progress continues to be made on the destruction of the remaining stockpiles. The aim is to complete this process in the shortest time possible.

6. A unique system of international verification to ensure non-diversion of chemicals for prohibited purposes is a hallmark of the OPCW. Close to 2,400 inspections since inception testify to the success of industry verification.
7. The objectives of the Convention are advanced within a framework of multilateral cooperation for mutual benefit. It has thus become a vehicle for offering assistance and protection against chemical weapons as well as for promoting peaceful uses of chemistry. Overall, the regime stands as a solid vanguard against chemical weapons.
8. The long quest to ban chemical weapons, interjected by tragic and repeated episodes of their use, has been vindicated. The Convention's blueprint of 1993 has been transformed into an edifice that stands tall in 2013. Prohibiting an entire category of weapons of mass destruction with a system of verification is an historic development.
9. But old threats have not disappeared. A stark reminder is the recent situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, where the Secretary-General has decided to conduct an investigation of the alleged use of chemical weapons. In accordance with standing agreements, the

resources of the OPCW have been placed at his disposal. States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention have supported this investigation. Chemical weapons in the context of Syria is a matter of serious concern. Any use of chemical weapons is reprehensible and unacceptable.

10. The case also illustrates how important it is to secure the universal acceptance of the Convention. The Secretary-General and I have jointly addressed letters to the leaders of the eight States not Party, inviting them to join the Convention without delay.
11. The Review Conference must issue a clarion call that chemical weapons stand totally condemned and that there is no justification, however argued, for not joining the Convention.
12. Through the work of the OPCW, the world is a much safer place. Elimination of all declared chemical weapons—a core objective—is in sight. We must now resolve to make the Convention a permanent barrier against chemical weapons in all parts of the world. Reaffirming this commitment is the key to the future success of the Convention. This Organisation does not have a sunset. This is not the time to lower our guard.
13. The future calls upon us to persevere with eliminating the remaining chemical weapons; to strengthen verification; to use our institutional experience and expertise, acquired over many years, in helping States Parties implement their obligations more fully; and to assist them in building their capacities to deal with new threats, including terrorism. We must also remain aware of the implications of new developments in scientific research. The imperative to perpetuate the global norm against chemical weapons

requires actions that will ensure the Convention's abiding relevance.

14. Today, in the face of changing circumstances, we must bring to bear our collective commitment and place the Convention on an enduring footing.
15. We are on the verge of reaching "global zero" on chemical weapons. The Third Review Conference is an occasion to establish a strategic direction that will preserve the effectiveness of the instrument that has brought about this remarkable achievement.
16. An Open-Ended Working Group has worked diligently to prepare for this Conference. I commend Ambassador Nassima Baghli of Algeria for her able stewardship of that process. The report of the Working Group provides an excellent basis for the Review Conference to conduct its work and finalise its recommendations.
17. To facilitate the Working Group's deliberations, the Secretariat provided details of its work over the last five years, both in presentations and as a document. The Secretariat's working paper, in its updated version, has been submitted to the Conference for its consideration. It also contains my overview of what has been achieved in the implementation of the Convention and what I see as our future challenges.
18. The OPCW will experience a significant reduction in its workload to verify the destruction of the now dwindling stockpiles of chemical weapons. Thus, a major theme for the Review Conference will be how best the core objectives of the Convention can continue to be effectively served.

19. A sudden reduction of resources for any institution can rapidly erode its capacities, its expertise, its institutional memory, and indeed its ability to carry on the remaining tasks. The capabilities that the OPCW has developed over the years in delivering a variety of programmes are rare and cannot be easily found elsewhere.
20. As a treaty with verification and related transparency and confidence-building measures at its heart, programmatic elements for preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons will acquire much greater salience in the future. States Parties need to consider continuing improvements in industry verification, transfer controls, and data monitoring, both nationally and by the Organisation.
21. The Convention primarily serves a security purpose and the OPCW will remain a security organisation. A key factor in the success of our multilateral endeavours, however, is the support from our larger membership, which constitutes developing countries or countries in transition. Barring a few, they have not been possessors of chemical weapons, nor do they have extensive industry. They understandably attach great importance to the provisions of the Convention on economic and technological development.
22. Our programmes in the area of international cooperation have been crucial in generating support for the overall goals of the Convention and in attracting such wide membership. Continued attention to and improvements in our international cooperation activities will serve the aims of the Convention.
23. Implementation of the Convention's allied provisions on assistance and protection against chemical weapons is an excellent example

of how we can make adjustments to accommodate evolving conditions, perceptions, and demands. Over the years, the approach of States Parties seems to have shifted from the classical concern about the use of chemical weapons in a battlefield situation to lower intensity incidents, mostly in the form of threats from non-State actors. This includes concerns about the possible misuse of industrial toxic chemicals. There is a clear expectation from the OPCW in the context of helping States Parties develop the capacities of national response teams and systems.

24. Future work in this and related areas will include establishing more effective coordination with the U.N. and other international agencies that have mandates covering prevention and consequence mitigation in the event of terrorist use of chemical or biological weapons. Developing mutually beneficial relationships and coordination at the regional and subregional levels will also be a priority.
25. Additionally, the threat from non-State actors and the threat of terrorism in particular have created an expectation for the Organisation to play a part in promoting chemical safety and security against the hostile use of toxic chemicals or preventing chemical accidents.
26. The demand for the OPCW's role in this area comes from States Parties themselves. It shows that, at a time of rapid change, we can indeed adapt in order to continue to fulfil our role effectively.
27. Ethical norms rooted in the Convention need to be widely disseminated: to the general public and, especially, among scientists, engineers, and academics. Outreach, education, and

public diplomacy should feature more prominently on the Organisation's agenda, in addition to a renewed emphasis on monitoring scientific and technological developments. Their possible implications for the verification mechanisms of the Convention must be closely followed.

28. Starting this year and concluding in 2015, which marks the centennial of the first massive use of chemical weapons during World War I, the OPCW will organise jointly with States Parties a series of activities and events to promote education and awareness about the Convention. While considering our responses to the changing environment and new challenges, we must continue to pay full attention to unfinished business.
29. National implementation of the Convention needs to improve globally. Any international treaty is only as good as its domestic implementation. National Authorities will continue to play a crucial role in this respect. The OPCW has acquired valuable experience assisting States Parties in fulfilling their treaty obligations. We regularly support the United Nations in its own endeavours, such as those meant to promote the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).
30. In the times ahead, the OPCW will pay much greater attention to tailor-made approaches to help individual countries implement their obligations under the Convention. We will continue to institute new methods and approaches to improve the overall record of national implementation as a significant number of States Parties still need to take action.

31. The Organisation was described by the Advisory Panel on Future Priorities of the OPCW as the “global repository of knowledge and expertise with regard to chemical weapons disarmament, the verification of their non-possession and non-use, and a repository of knowledge about their destruction”. It recommended that “the OPCW should find ways of ensuring continuity in its knowledge base and expertise in these areas”.
32. With disarmament nearing completion and the consequent structural changes that are inevitable, such knowledge is in danger of dissipating. I propose the setting up of a training and research centre at the Secretariat. Such a centre will act as a focal point for consolidating OPCW training programmes both for staff and States Parties and will offer modular training, devised in accordance with modern methods and means of dissemination, to cover a variety of subjects. It will constitute a resource available to all States Parties. It will also provide support to regional centres of training that States Parties are encouraged to establish.
33. We need common understanding of longer-term priorities, adequate resource allocations and an appropriate structure of the Secretariat. This will sharpen the vision of the future of the Convention and the OPCW as a permanent bulwark against chemical weapons. The Third Review Conference provides us with an invaluable opportunity to outline such a framework.
34. Our work would be incomplete without the participation of experts, academics, scientists and other members of civil society. I wish in particular to acknowledge the vital role of the chemical industry. Industry’s contribution makes the Chemical Weapons Convention

a unique example of public and private partnership in the service of peace. I am glad to note the high level of participation of representatives of civil society in this Review Conference.

35. The prohibition against chemical weapons shows how the international community can advance the cause of disarmament and international peace. The spirit of cooperation and consensus amongst States Parties makes the OPCW exemplary in the field of multilateral diplomacy. A manifestation of the constructive approach of States Parties is the significant voluntary contributions made by them and by regional organisations.

36. This is a defining moment in the history of the chemical weapons ban. I am confident that the characteristic dedication and commitment of our States Parties will once again be fully evident during this Conference, leading to an outcome that will be consistent with the hopes and expectations of the international community.

37. I wish the Review Conference every success.

Thank you for your attention.