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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ROBERT P. MIKULAK
UNITED STATES DELEGATION TO THE OPCW
AT THE SIXTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairman,

As we begin the Sixty-Fourth Session of the Executive Council, I would like to thank you, Ambassador Blarel, for your outstanding leadership of this body over the past year. You have indeed set a high bar for your successor. Your able management of the consultation related to meeting the final extended deadlines for destruction of chemical weapons is but one of many examples of your strong leadership. I pledge my delegation's support as you complete your tenure and move the matter into the Council. The United States also thanks the delegations who have actively participated for their thoughtful contributions during this exercise.

I would also like to welcome our new Deputy Director-General, Mrs Grace Asirwatham. We look forward to working closely with her.

Mr Chairman, Mr Director-General, distinguished delegates,

This Organisation prides itself on its ability to operate by consensus, and its proven track record in this area speaks to the skill and commitment of the diplomats engaged here. We have collectively succeeded in reaching agreement on complex and highly political issues in the past. I have full faith and confidence in this Council's ability to do so again on the issue of complete chemical weapons destruction, which is a fundamental goal of this Convention. I appeal to the Council to be mindful of the tone and spirit of the debate.

I understand the call by interested States Parties for the United States to reaffirm our commitment to this endeavour. Let me make clear that the United States commitment to complete destruction is unwavering. While I welcome the efforts in the informal consultations to develop further confidence-building measures, I'd like to also emphasise the actions that we continue to undertake in the interest of transparency and to maintaining the integrity and credibility of the Convention.

The United States is fully committed to meeting its obligation under the Convention to destroy 100% of its chemical weapons stockpile, as rapidly as is feasible and in a manner that is safe and environmentally sound. In 2006, when the United States requested an extension of its deadline for destruction, it projected that it would destroy approximately 66% of its



chemical weapons stockpile by 29 April 2012. As we reported during this week's destruction informal consultation, the United States has completed the destruction of more than 85% of its chemical weapons stockpile, which represents a significant effort.

We are committed to continue demonstrating the transparency of our chemical weapons destruction programme, so that Member States can evaluate our efforts for themselves. To that end, we have provided reports for the past four years that track our progress in 90-day intervals. We have also made candid presentations at every informal meeting of the Executive Council on chemical weapons destruction, to offer detailed information on our destruction efforts. We have briefed delegates at the Conference of the States Parties for the past two years. We continue to invite Executive Council representatives to visit our facilities to observe first-hand the scale and complexity of our programme and the seriousness of our efforts. In fact, the March visit by an Executive Council delegation to two U.S. facilities, Tooele in Utah, and Pueblo in Colorado, was characterised in the delegation's visit report as a positive development. The report noted that "the members of the delegation were impressed by the efforts being undertaken by the United States and its commitment to completing the destruction of remaining stockpiles as soon as possible. The delegation also commended the efforts of those who work on the ground, as well as the investment – in both human and material terms – being made in order to finish the destruction of chemical weapons."

The United States echoes the concerns raised by others with respect to Libya's stated inability to meet the 15 May deadline to complete its Category 1 chemical weapons destruction and to guarantee the security of its remaining stockpiles. We support the steps taken by the Director-General. Further, we request that he keep Member States informed, and alert the Executive Council if its action is needed. We urge Libya to reaffirm its obligation under the Convention and to carry out the destruction of all chemical weapons with full transparency and in the presence of OPCW inspectors.

As this body considers new steps to enhance the relevance of the OPCW in the coming years, the United States believes that the main purpose of the OPCW must continue to be strengthening international security against the misuse of chemicals for hostile purposes. The OPCW will remain a disarmament organisation, dedicated to eliminating existing stockpiles, until all States with chemical weapons have joined the Convention and destroyed their stockpiles and facilities. However, the OPCW is also dedicated to ensuring that the threat of chemical weapons does not reappear. Thus, the non-proliferation of chemical weapons is a fundamental element of the OPCW's activities.

In this context, the mid-April seminar on "The OPCW's Contribution to Security and the Non-proliferation of Chemical Weapons" was hugely successful in exploring fresh ideas. It highlighted the importance of building States Parties' capacities against the misuse of toxic chemicals, whether by diversion to malign States or non-State actors. It also underscored the manner in which the Convention's Article VII national implementation serves to also advance United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 fulfilment, ensuring the non-diversion of chemicals to terrorists.

The United States continues to believe that Articles VII, X, and XI all make important contributions to enhancing international security. The November workshop that explored new initiatives under Article XI also produced useful ideas for progress under Articles VII and X. Such initiatives include partnering among National Authorities, and making National Authorities more aware of international cooperation and assistance opportunities. Other

useful ideas coming from the workshop include conducting training for licensing and customs officials, and establishing a database to build improved assistance networks.

Indeed, Mr Chairman, a recent OPCW briefing revealed that the requirement for legislation covering all the key areas required under the Convention has been met by only 46% of States Parties. This situation must be more fully addressed: how can we all help each other? My delegation supports, in particular, the Article XI workshop idea for development of a database of expertise. This database would be populated by National Authorities with information to match donors with recipients for specific issues, such as improving Article VII assistance. The U.S. National Authority stands ready to help any other State Party that is in need of national implementation assistance. It is our understanding that the OPCW and other States Parties are willing to do the same.

As for Article X, the United States looks forward to the OPCW-hosted conference on chemical safety and security to be held in September as part of the International Year of Chemistry. The U.S. Government is making a voluntary contribution to support this conference and we encourage others to do so as well. The sharing of best practices and lessons learned regarding chemical safety and security can promote understanding of how to keep populations safe and further the development of chemical industry. The International Year of Chemistry presents an opportunity to promote the OPCW's efforts to ensure that toxic chemicals are used only to help people and not to hurt them.

Turning to industry issues, the United States congratulates the Technical Secretariat for recently completing its 2,000th Article VI inspection since entry into force of the Convention. This accomplishment is emblematic of the cooperative spirit that exists among the Technical Secretariat, Member States, and the global chemical industry. The OPCW's future success in industry verification will continue to depend on strong partnership and cooperation between the Technical Secretariat, National Authorities and the chemical industry.

As we sharpen our focus on preventing the re-emergence of a chemical weapons threat, we cannot ignore industry-related issues that are relevant to the Organisation. The chemical industry continues to evolve and develop around us and the fields of chemistry and biology increasingly overlap. It is appropriate to commend the OPCW's successful history of verifying Member State compliance. Nonetheless, we should also continue to seek opportunities to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of industry verification. The United States is pleased to see the reinvigoration of the industry cluster and the high level of interest among States Parties in the issues that are currently under facilitation.

The United States fully supports the efforts of Ambassador Wagner to develop a set of guidelines that will shape the number and frequency of Article VI inspections in future years. The United States is confident that, under Ambassador Wagner's leadership, we will agree on guidelines that will maintain confidence in our collective security without micromanaging the activities of the Technical Secretariat. The United States is also confident that we will find a solution that ensures that all States Parties with declared industry facilities participate in industry verification on a recurring basis. This solution must also satisfactorily address the large number of facilities—more than 3,000—that have yet to receive their first inspection.

On a separate but related issue, the United States greatly appreciates the efforts of Ambassadors Lohman and Taib to improve the current selection methodology for OCPF sites. The Technical Secretariat has proposed modifications that are intended to focus on

sites of higher relevance without additionally burdening national authorities and their chemical industries. We continue to support an approach that seeks to more effectively utilise data currently available to the Technical Secretariat before requesting new information from States Parties. The current proposals appear to meet this basic objective, and we pledge our support to the facilitators in finding a constructive outcome to this consultation.

Another long-standing issue that requires timely resolution is continued verification measures for chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) 10 years after their conversion to peaceful purposes. Again, we thank Ambassador Pieter de Savornin Lohman for his patience in facilitating this issue, which has been deferred by the Council eight times. Such inaction by the Council is very disappointing. The Convention requires the Executive Council to determine a verification regime for these converted facilities, and it is high time for the Council to reach a consensus. Given that these facilities were designed to produce chemical weapons, and considering the special category assigned to them by the Convention, all converted facilities should continue to be subject to the possibility of inspection for an extended period. In practice, however, the number of such inspections each year could be a small fraction of the total, perhaps 20%, and be based upon a facility risk assessment that takes into account facility features and activity. If such an approach can be agreed upon, we could agree that such verification would be funded from the OPCW budget. Continued verification along these lines is, in the view of the United States, more than reasonable, in exchange for accommodating the “compelling economic need” that justified their exceptional conversion.

It is clear that we have considerable work ahead of us and we are entering a defining year for the Organisation. My delegation unreservedly supports the nominee as incoming Chairperson, Ambassador Peter Goosen of South Africa, to effectively lead us through this critical time in a manner that effectively preserves the integrity of the Convention and firmly sets out the future of the Organisation. In this regard, my delegation is also pleased by the nomination of Russian Ambassador Roman Kolodkin, Indian Ambassador Bhaswati Mukherjee, Argentine Ambassador Santos Goñi Marengo, and German Ambassador Gregor Koebel as Vice-Chairs.

In closing, I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Sixty-Fourth Session of the Council.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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