



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

Seventy-Second Session  
6 and 7 May 2013

EC-72/NAT.6  
6 May 2013  
ENGLISH only

**NORWAY**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ANNIKEN R. KRUTNES  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NORWAY TO THE OPCW  
AT THE SEVENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chair,

Let me start by thanking you personally for your contribution as Chair of the Executive Council during the last year. In a challenging and eventful year for the OPCW, you have provided this Council with guidance and leadership. We are especially thankful for your efforts in ensuring that the Executive Council did not remain silent when it first became known that chemical weapons may have been used in Syria. Mindful of the many important tasks this Council faces in the near future, Norway stands ready to also cooperate fully with your successor.

While we have just recently successfully completed the Third Review Conference, it is appropriate to take the time to discuss its outcomes and how they can be operationalised. The success of the Conference can partly be attributed to an open, transparent and inclusive process under the very able chairmanship of Ambassador Krzysztof Patulej of Poland. The preparations for the Conference in the Open-Ended Working Group under the leadership of Ambassador Nassima Baghli of Algeria also provided us with the foundation for our deliberations. I would also like to highlight the important contributions from Ambassador Al-Ali of Iraq as Chair of the Committee of the Whole, as well as Ambassador Peter Goosen of South Africa in the role as facilitator for the Political Declaration. The Director-General and his staff also provided us with vital assistance in the process.

For Norway it was vital for the success of the Third Review Conference that we reached consensus on language expressing concern about Syria. This showed the outside world that the OPCW is still relevant. Without such a consensus, the credibility of the OPCW would have been at stake, and this could have been detrimental to the goals and objectives of the Convention. Even though the language referring to Syria in the report is clear and strong, Norway would have preferred an even stronger emphasis on support to the United Nations Secretary-General's mission in Syria.

Furthermore, The Third Review Conference was successful in confirming the role of the OPCW as the world's repository of knowledge of chemical weapons now and in the future. While noting the importance of completing the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles, the States Parties also acknowledged that the Organisation's role will gradually go from verification of destruction of dwindling stockpiles to preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons.



On the first day of the Review Conference, the States Parties took a landmark decision when they finally gave civil society a platform at the Chemical Weapons Convention. The presence, attendance and participation of civil society added in our view important value to the Conference. A record number of participants from civil society organised a number of side events that were forward looking and challenging. Norway has actively promoted increased interaction between the OPCW and civil society and we will continue to do so. It is our hope that the practice of the Third Review Conference will set the standard upon which we base all our meetings of the Conference, starting with the Eighteenth Session of the Conference later this year.

Norway, together with our Nordic colleagues advocated developing the OPCW Central Analytical Database (OCAD) in order to further improve the verification regime. In our view further additions to OCAD are necessary to allow the OPCW to effectively perform sampling and analysis under the different scenarios envisaged in the Convention. In this regard, it is vital that this Council is mindful of its responsibility to approve relevant proposed additions to keep the OPCW Central Analytical Database updated. We look forward to continuing the constructive dialogue we had with interested delegations during the Third Review Conference about this important issue.

Norway supported the goal of establishing a discussion on the topic of toxic chemicals as weapons for law enforcement, so-called incapacitating chemical agents. Twenty years after the issue was first identified, we came very close to agreeing. While we regret that no consensus could be reached, we found it extremely promising that so many delegations expressed positive interest in the subject. From our point of view, the use of incapacitating chemical agents poses risks to life and health and is a potential threat to the prohibition of chemical weapons. Let me assure you that Norway will continue to bring this issue forward. We will therefore encourage a debate under the auspices of the Executive Council or in any other appropriate OPCW forum at the earliest convenience.

Madam Chair,

Although we should be happy with the good news that Somalia has announced that it will join the Convention shortly and that Libya has restarted its destruction activities, more worrying news occupy our minds. The allegations that chemical weapons may have resurfaced in Syria is of great concern to Norway. It is imperative that Syrian authorities grant unconditional and immediate access, so that the United Nations mission can carry out its work in Syria with the support of the OPCW.

Using chemical weapons is a violation of international norms and standards, and we, the international community, have a responsibility to verify if these horrifying weapons have been used. We urge the Syrian Government to fully cooperate with the United Nations Secretary-General in this regard.

Finally, may I request that this statement be treated as an official document of the Seventy-Second Session of the Executive Council.

Thank you.