



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

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## **ARGENTINA**

### **STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ARGENTINA AT THE SEVENTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ON AGENDA ITEM NINE: EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**

Mr Chairperson,

We welcome and value the detailed presentation by the Technical Secretariat on the activities that are developing on the subject of education and outreach.

In addition to the valuable information provided by the Secretariat, and as has been mentioned in its statement, we would like to address some documents that serve as a reference on this matter. In this regard, we should like to mention the report of the Third Review Conference, the report of the Temporary Working Group of the Scientific Advisory Board on Education and Outreach, the results of the meeting of National Authorities on education and outreach at the close of 2014, and the Technical Secretariat's Note entitled "The OPCW in 2025: Ensuring a World Free of Chemical Weapons" (S/1252/2015, dated 6 March 2015).

There is no doubt whatsoever that one of the essential activities of the OPCW will continue to be the verification of the complete destruction of declared chemical stockpiles. However, it is no less certain that during the course of this decade, the activities pertaining to the destruction of said stockpiles will decline substantially.

The OPCW has another fundamental pillar which is to facilitate the peaceful use of chemistry for the benefit of humankind. Our country fully supports the right of each State Party to develop its own chemical industry for peaceful purposes. However, as has been demonstrated in the most crude and frightful manner in the recent past, some toxic chemicals have a dual use—such as chlorine—and can be used both for peaceful and malicious purposes.

Today's realities also are a sign that the world of science is constantly expanding. It is certain that science and technology will continue to make progress at an accelerated rate, that technological advances will be integrated more quickly into the pace of a basic investigation, and that there will be an increased convergence among scientific disciplines.

As stipulated in Article I of the Convention, the Organisation has to ensure that no State develops, produces, or procures chemical weapons. Thus, the OPCW must remain vigilant



and cooperate with its members to prevent any State or non-State actor from using chemicals for the purposes prohibited by the Convention.

This brief introduction is meant to express that both mandates—disarmament and the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons—have coexisted at the same time, but with distinct priorities. As disarmament requirements are met, the Organisation can gradually dedicate greater efforts to preventative activities.

Allow me to cite a paragraph from the aforementioned document, “The OPCW in 2025”, which in our understanding conveys the scope that the preventative functions of the Organisation have taken on. “[...] preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons cuts across all traditional results areas of the Organisation, and contains elements of verification, capacity development, improved national implementation, effective national protective programmes, engagement with relevant stakeholders through education and outreach activities, promotion of responsible use of science, the continued pursuit of universality, as well as the monitoring of relevant new developments in science and technology”.

The challenge that we face at this stage of transition and reflection is how to generate a strategy that integrates and organises all of these activities into one complete programme, and how to involve the various actors, States, international organisations, scientific communities, the academic world, and civil society in this process.

In terms of the specific aspects that refer to the promotion of a culture of responsible use of scientific chemical knowledge and outreach on the obligations and responsibilities set out in the Chemical Weapons Convention, we call upon all of the delegations to refer to the report by the Temporary Working Group of the Scientific Advisory Board, which summarises and compiles all of the initiatives that have been developed on this subject.

But perhaps even more important, this Group has proposed a series of recommendations that we believe are very valuable. In particular, we would like to touch on the recommendation proposing a permanent team of experts that would serve to advise the Technical Secretariat on these matters. We believe that this team, with adequate experience, would be an investment that is both important and complementary to the human resources available in the Secretariat. At the same time, the work of these experts would enrich the period of reflection mentioned above.

Along these same lines, we await the results of the workshop held by the Director-General to analyse the important initiative to develop ethics and conduct guidelines for professionals in chemistry in connection with the Chemical Weapons Convention.

In this same context, we support the creation of a chemical industry coordination group as announced by the Director-General in his opening statement at this session.

The Argentine Republic has actively participated in the evolutionary process of issues involving education and outreach since the beginning. We recently shared with all of you our National Project on this matter, which our National Authority continues to develop in collaboration with national academic and scientific communities.

We also had the opportunity to share with all of you the results of the First Regional Meeting on Education in the Responsible Application of Knowledge Relating to Dual-Use Chemicals,

which took place in Buenos Aires in April of 2014. We are pleased to learn that over the course of this year, there will be two regional meetings on education and outreach in China and Algeria. We encourage the countries within these regions to participate, and we are confident that they will have very positive results.

The Commemoration of the Centennial of the First Large-Scale Use of Chemical Weapons, which will take place in Ieper this April, offers us a unique opportunity to sensitise the public in general on the danger posed by chemical weapons and the need to eliminate them from the face of the earth for all time. This event will also allow us to emphasise and promote the unique role that the OPCW has in preventing the re-emergence of said weapons in all fields of scientific knowledge.

We would be most grateful if this statement could please be issued as an official document of this Session of the Executive Council.

Thank you.

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