

(check against delivery)

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At the outset I would like to thank the Chairperson of the Executive Council for inviting me to meet states parties of the OPCW. As requested, I will focus on the two areas as succinctly as possible.

First, on the future priorities.

The OPCW stands at a critical crossroads. For the past twenty years, it has done a tremendous job and achieved a lot to uphold the norm against the chemical weapons. It is now recognized as the world's premier platform to promote global disarmament while ensuring the peaceful and secure technology development. The Nobel Peace Prize of 2013 was one of many international recognitions. But we cannot and should not be complacent. Recent setbacks in Middle East and elsewhere clearly show that we must persist until the job is fully done.

Looking ahead, all states parties must re-summon the unity of purpose. Humanity has fought hard and long, together, against the scourge of chemical weapons. The taboo against chemical weapons has been consolidated by withstanding the many tests that have occurred along this long journey. In today's globalized world, challenges are increasingly inter-connected. Therefore we cannot succeed if we do not act together with the shared sense of purpose and commitment. Any violation, real or alleged, must be dealt with, decisively and collectively by all states parties. Impunity must be stopped. Perpetrators must be deterred.

The universalization of the norm must be pursued with renewed vigor. Approaches need to be tailored to take into account different contextual factors in each of the four states remaining outside the Convention. Engagement with each of them needs to be intensified at the highest level. It must be backed by all states parties and partner organizations including in particular the Secretary-General of the UN as the depositary of the Convention.

The destruction of the chemical weapons must continue. We cannot afford to relent until we reach a point of global zero. Even one chemical weapon left unattended is too much for human suffering. Growing proliferation risks must be met with greater focus on prevention and enhanced preparedness. To meet emerging risks and threats, capacities need to be scaled up both for states parties

and the Secretariat. More can be done as we strive for efficiency gains from a better needs assessment and a diversified matching with donors and a better teaming up with regional and multilateral partners.

Preparedness needs to be enhanced so as to address any contingency with a timely and adequate response. Many valuable lessons have been learned from various contingency operations. Scenario based contingency planning can be further developed to improve the readiness before a contingency happens and ensure the early deployment of assistance for protection after the fact.

We must continue to sharpen the tools provided by the Convention for inspection, verification and investigation. This will require continued development of a multi-dimensional approach in partnership with various inter-governmental organizations, with the goal of producing a win-win synergy. This is crucial not only in the fight against the WMD proliferation but also for the mitigation of threats associated with the WMD terrorism.

Engagement with other stakeholders, among others, the industry and the scientific and academic community needs to be enlarged for mutual benefits. The responsible industry is the strongest ally in promoting the culture of chemical security and safety. The role of science in disarmament is growing and increasingly important. Science provides new tools for disarmament. New technologies can enable a more analytical and evidence-based approach. With the help of new innovative tools, needs and risks can be better assessed and results better evaluated. Scientists' understanding of the disarmament responsibility and ethics is also crucial in minimizing the possible negative impact of technological advances. We must do everything possible to stay ahead of the technology curve, not lagging behind.

Mr. Chairperson,

Now I would like to turn to management issues. We need to recognize the global "new normal" of budget constraints in the international public financing. But we can make a compelling case that OPCW delivers on its mandates with greater value for money for the states parties than any other comparable organizations. This is evident in the fact that OPCW was able to attract a

significant amount of voluntary contributions from donors to meet unforeseen demands.

With that, I will make three further generic points.

First, efforts must continue to make and maintain the Secretariat fit for purpose. The continuing priority should be on recruiting the best possible talent around the globe and retaining the expertise for now and for the future. OPCW staff expertise is a valuable asset of the international community not only for chemical weapons area but also for biological and other WMD areas. The culture of technical professionalism backed by conscious quest for scientific literacy and technical proficiency, has been cultivated. This must continue. On that basis, broadening geographical diversity including through training and networking, needs to be further prioritized. Gender balance also needs to be given higher attention by the management leadership. Best practices can be considered and learned as necessary in the area of human resources management, including the tenure policy.

Second, new management tools need to be updated. Results-based management requires a more holistic working culture going beyond silos and a more efficient assessment and knowledge management. Business practices need to be streamlined for a better enterprise resources planning. ERP is a tool to help modernize the management process of the Secretariat. As a late comer in this area, benefits can be optimized by minimizing the cost of transition.

Third, we should strive for more effective communication with and greater outreach to the global public including in particular youth. It can be done without much additional cost if we better use new communication tools such as social media. Creative ideas and e-solutions can be a multiplier. Raising awareness and promoting advocacy are instrumental in solidifying global consensus at this time when the norm is increasingly being challenged.

Mr. Chairperson and Excellencies,

I am deeply grateful to all states parties for your solid and steadfast commitment to preserving and strengthening the norm against chemical weapons. It is my humble wish to make available myself for consideration by OPCW states

parties for the DG position. If I am given the honor by you, I assure you to do my very best to serve the states parties and the international community solely for the cause of a world, safer without chemical weapons.

The OPCW will continue to provide the beacon shining the path toward the destination of a chemical weapon free and chemical secure world. The journey along this path will be tough and long. If you allow me, I am prepared and determined to join this journey under your guidance. I strongly believe in the wisdom of Africans, when they said “If you want to go fast, go alone; but, if you want to go far, go together.” Together, driven by the common resolve and the shared purpose, I am sure we can reach our common destination. This is my humble but resolute pledge to all of you.

I thank you so much for your attention.

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