



ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION
OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

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**“THE OPCW AS AN EXAMPLE OF EFFECTIVE
MULTILATERALISM”**

ADDRESS BY

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1. Let me begin by saying how very pleased I am to be speaking today in such a distinguished venue as this on behalf of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Professor de Zwaan and the Clingendael Institute for organising today's event, as well as my congratulations to the Institute for its 25th Anniversary which is being commemorated this year. I very much look forward to our continued engagement so that together we can promote greater public awareness about issues of mutual interest to both our organisations.

2. I also wish to extend a warm welcome to everyone present. Many of you are already familiar with the OPCW's work, some of you less so, and perhaps a few have only passing knowledge of what we do. I wish to offer some reflections on the OPCW and its relationship to global peace and security that I hope you will find of interest, and perhaps thought-provoking.

Introduction

3. I've chosen as my theme for today's presentation "the OPCW as an example of effective multilateralism" because the OPCW unequivocally upholds the values of multilateralism and reaps the fruit of it every day in the work of our Organisation. At this juncture in time, when global peace and security are under growing pressures, I believe our experience provides further evidence that multilateral approaches are the most productive and sustainable for solving problems in this sphere. The Chemical Weapons Convention, which was negotiated entirely within a multilateral framework, is the first and only international treaty that bans an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, with a stringent and non-discriminatory verification regime that is equally applicable to all States Parties. The Convention establishes rights and obligations of far-reaching scope to ensure that chemical weapons are effectively banned and never re-emerge, and that chemistry is used for the peaceful benefit of humankind.

4. Last year we marked the tenth anniversary of the Convention's entry into force and creation of the OPCW. This was a significant milestone not only for the Organisation and its Member States but for the entire international community as it recalled the

progress we have made in mankind's long struggle to abolish the use of poison and toxic chemicals as weapons of war. During the past eleven years our Member States have shown remarkable goodwill and dedication in building a strong and vibrant multilateral Organisation. By working together on the basis of equality we have made concrete progress in chemical disarmament and non-proliferation, and fostered assistance and protection and international cooperation among our Member States.

5. The sine qua non of these achievements has been the sustained commitment of the States Parties over the years. This was most recently demonstrated in April at the Second Review Conference on the Chemical Weapons Convention, when States Parties reaffirmed all of the treaty's main provisions and their steadfast support for its noble goals. The Conference concluded that the Convention sets new standards for global disarmament and non-proliferation through verification in a non-discriminatory and multilateral manner. This sustained commitment of our States Parties is both a cause and effect of effective multilateralism, and a tribute to the world's determination to do away with some of the deadliest weapons ever devised by humankind. To appreciate the significance of these achievements, allow me to briefly review the history of chemical warfare and to present the work of the Organisation in implementing the Convention.

The Convention as the best instrument to abolish chemical weapons

6. The first major attempt to ban chemical weapons was made here in this city in 1899, when The Hague Convention forbade the use of projectiles for the diffusion of what were then called "asphyxiating or deleterious gases". This prohibition was unusually forward-looking because such projectiles had not even been invented at the time, but it reflected the general alarm and revulsion that existed toward chemical weapons from their earliest stages of development. The 1925 Geneva Protocols banned the first use of both chemical as well as biological weapons, but did not address their production, storage or transfer. Unfortunately, as we know, these early attempts to prohibit the use of chemicals as a means of warfare failed.

7. From the fields of Ieper and other fronts of the First World War to the Iran-Iraq conflict, Halabja and terrorist attack on the Tokyo subway, chemical weapons were used extensively throughout the 20th Century. As recently as last year, militant groups

in Iraq used chlorine gas with conventional explosives in a series of attacks that killed and wounded numerous innocent civilians, providing a stark reminder that even the most common chemicals can still be misused to threaten our collective security. A Permanent Memorial dedicated to all Victims of Chemical Weapons was unveiled in The Hague by Queen Beatrix in May 2007 to recall the suffering of all victims of these dreadful weapons.

Features of the Convention

8. Unlike The Hague Convention and Geneva Protocol, the Chemical Weapons Convention does not just prohibit the use of chemical weapons but is designed to eliminate them altogether, forever, from the face of the earth. It is a comprehensive ban prohibiting their development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use by all States Parties. Unlike the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention does not create any exceptions to the rule that chemical weapons are prohibited for all countries. All States Parties have equal rights and obligations, and those who possess chemical weapons must destroy their stockpiles according to given deadlines.

9. Furthermore, in comparison with the Biological Weapons Convention which does not have a verification mechanism, all States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention are subject to a non-discriminatory regime of international inspections to verify their compliance with its provisions. These inspections are conducted by the OPCW Technical Secretariat and cover all declared chemical weapons stockpiles and production facilities, as well as more than 5,000 industrial plants around the world that produce chemicals - or have production processes - which could be used to make chemical weapons.

10. The destruction of all chemical weapons is a core objective of the OPCW. In tandem with the Convention's non-proliferation aims, one could call this an urgent objective, since the Convention establishes strict deadlines for its implementation. Within 30 days of joining the Convention, every State Party that possesses chemical weapons must provide a detailed declaration of its stockpiles to the OPCW. The Technical Secretariat immediately verifies the declared stockpiles and then monitors

their safe and complete destruction on-site until the process is finished. The same is done for chemical weapons production facilities, which must either be completely destroyed or converted to purposes not prohibited by the Convention.

11. Parallel to these activities, the Technical Secretariat conducts round-the-year inspections of industrial facilities which produce toxic chemicals and precursors that could be used in chemical weapons and are grouped into three Schedules of priority. OPCW is also giving greater attention now to what we call Other Chemical Production Facilities, which do not produce Scheduled chemicals but have production processes that could lend themselves to making chemical weapons.

12. To date, six States Parties to the Convention have declared chemical weapons stockpiles, and all have been actively engaged in destroying them under strict OPCW verification and oversight. More than 40% of the total of 71,000 metric tonnes of declared chemical agent has now been destroyed, as have one third of the 8.7 million declared chemical munitions. These stockpiles include large quantities of highly lethal nerve agents like VX, a mere drop of which, if properly dispersed, would kill everyone in a room like this one in a matter of minutes. So destroying such agents and munitions is a very dangerous, time-consuming and expensive challenge. Of equal importance, 95 percent of all declared chemical weapons production facilities have been completely destroyed or converted to peaceful uses. OPCW inspectors have regularly monitored and verified all of these demilitarisation activities.

13. A second core and long term objective of the Convention and of the OPCW is the non-proliferation of chemical weapons. Consequently, the international verification regime stipulated by the Convention has been successfully operationalised to ensure that no new chemical weapons are produced or acquired. A growing number of States Parties are also putting into place the necessary legal and regulatory measures required for full implementation of the Convention at the national level. Both of these developments are crucial to our success in the field of non-proliferation. As the OPCW enters its second decade of existence, I believe its foundations are solid and the Organisation will be able to address any new proliferation challenges that arise.

14. Let me also stress the critical importance of the OPCW's other two areas of activity – assistance and protection, and international cooperation - because I believe they effectively contribute to the Convention's universal appeal. All of our Member States share a concern for the safety and security of their citizens, and OPCW contributes to that with training, technical expertise and assistance against the use, or threat of use, of chemical weapons. Over the years we have organised hundreds of training courses for first responders, government experts and emergency response units from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe that have strengthened national and regional capabilities.

15. Likewise, all of our Member States want to enjoy the benefits of national development, and the OPCW promotes the peaceful uses of chemistry with the fullest possible exchange of chemicals, equipment and information including workshops, laboratory support, research grants, an Associate Programme, internships and other activities. On the whole, 5,600 participants have benefited from over 500 OPCW programmes. These are important attractions for achieving universality.

Relations with industry

16. In this regard I would mention another key aspect of the Chemical Weapons Convention – it is the first arms control treaty that directly impacts and relies upon industry for its full implementation. The OPCW enjoys the support not only of governments around the world today but of the global chemical industry as well, representing a unique partnership in the history of arms control and non-proliferation. Dialogue with the chemical industry about the most effective ways of conducting industrial verification has always been essential for the proper functioning of the Convention. From the outset, industry worked with the OPCW Technical Secretariat to design a credible verification system and to help train our inspectors, and it remains a key collaborator in the implementation process. In addition, the chemical industry implements its own governance measures to ensure that its products and technologies are not diverted for hostile purposes.

17. This continuing close partnership is essential to both the effective implementation of the Convention and to the further evolution of the verification system as it relates to industry. For all these reasons, the OPCW recognizes the chemical industry as a

major Stakeholder, with a capital “S”. We are justifiably proud of the cooperation we enjoy with the International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA), the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC) and with chemical associations around the world.

The OPCW’s main achievements and future challenges

18. Allow me to take a few moments now to summarize what I see as the OPCW’s main achievements. An over-arching one is universality, which is fundamental to the success of the OPCW. After just over a decade of existence, the OPCW today boasts a membership of 184 countries with 98 percent of the world’s population, giving it the fastest rate of accession in history for any disarmament treaty. Of the 11 UN Member States that remain outside the Convention, Iraq and Lebanon are well advanced in their domestic procedures with the parliaments in both countries having approved accession to the Convention. We appreciate their decision to join the CWC and have extended to them all possible assistance to facilitate their accession.

19. There are other countries outside the Convention which fully support its objectives but haven’t yet joined because of logistic or resource constraints. And some countries have yet to indicate any intention of joining the OPCW, which is a cause of understandable concern to States Parties. The absence of any State from the Convention whether big or small, rich or poor, but particularly one that might have an active chemical programme and/or stockpiles, could greatly undermine the goal of achieving a total prohibition of chemical weapons. The Middle East is one region of particular concern. There, Egypt, Israel - which has signed but not ratified the Convention - and Syria have yet to take concrete steps to join the Treaty. Another area of anxiety is north-east Asia, where the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea has so far declined to have contact with the OPCW.

20. The collective view of the OPCW’s 184 States is that, regional conflicts notwithstanding, there is no moral, ethical or strategic justification today for not joining the Chemical Weapons Convention - all the more so when chemical weapons are of decreasing strategic significance and remain basically instruments of terror against civilians. Quite appropriately, therefore the Second Review Conference strongly urged the remaining States not Party to ratify or accede to the Convention as

a matter of urgency and without preconditions. We must relentlessly continue to raise this issue with those countries.

21. As I have already outlined, concrete progress has been achieved in eliminating what were inordinately large stockpiles of chemical weapons. However, 60% of these stockpiles are still to be destroyed and only four years remain until the final disarmament deadline of 29 April 2012 as established in the Convention. The Possessor States have shown good will and commitment to this task, but a prudent approach warrants keeping the progress being made under close review.

22. Regarding non-proliferation, there is of course no finite goal or end point to preventing the emergence of new chemical weapons. But we can state that since the Convention's entry into force in 1997 the Technical Secretariat has conducted more than 1,400 inspections of chemical industry facilities on the territory of 80 States Parties. That is a remarkable figure considering the logistics involved, and one that reflects the high degree of efficiency developed by our Verification and Inspectorate divisions over the past decade. On any given day, somewhere in the world the chemical industry is now being inspected by the OPCW in fulfilment of its non-proliferation mandate. Even when chemical disarmament is completed, non-proliferation will remain a permanent concern. The OPCW has built a consensus that national implementation measures are critical, particularly in preventing the development, production or transfer of chemical weapons or the misuse of toxic chemicals. This will require continued refinement and enhancement of our industry verification efforts.

23. The possibility that terrorists may use chemical weapons has created renewed interest in the ability of the OPCW to coordinate the delivery of emergency assistance in the event of an attack, or the threat of such an attack. The ease with which some commonly available toxic chemical compounds can be used for nefarious purposes, using rudimentary but widely available knowledge to weaponise them, makes it incumbent on all States to be aware of and address the existing dangers. Full implementation of the Convention by all States Parties, working together in all regions and with all stakeholders, is an essential means to address the threat of chemical terrorism.

24. Such an endeavour also accords entirely with the objectives of the United Nations Security Council's non-proliferation efforts under Resolution 1540. Though the OPCW is not an anti-terrorism agency, the comprehensive prohibition against chemical weapons that falls within its remit has an important contribution to make in this area. The Organisation's role in this context is clearly recognised in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2006 which the Assembly has reaffirmed as recently as 5th September 2008.

Unique multilateral virtues of CWC

25. I now wish to return to the central theme of multilateralism and highlight the unique virtues of the Convention and of the OPCW. In my view there are five: The comprehensive nature of the Convention; the principle of non-discrimination between Possessor and non-Possessor States; the OPCW's tradition of consensus-based policymaking; the ethos of mutual assistance among Members States; and our collaborative relationship with industry. Let me briefly enlarge upon each of these.

26. The history of The Hague Convention and Geneva Protocols regrettably demonstrated that so long as chemical weapons are allowed to exist, they will be used. The Chemical Weapons Convention aims to eliminate that threat by comprehensively banning chemical weapons and preventing new ones from emerging. This goal remains a work in progress, but we can already state with great confidence that the possession and use of chemical weapons has been de-legitimised by an overwhelming majority of States.

27. Our experience also highlights the fundamental importance of non-discrimination in multilateral disarmament efforts. All OPCW members share the same rights and obligations and all are equally accountable for complying with the provisions of the Convention. This principle has engendered both a broad sense of ownership among OPCW members and strong commitment to achieving the Convention's goals.

28. The third virtue – our tradition of consensus-based policymaking – means that competing interests must be reconciled to reach agreement on all policy issues. This can sometimes be difficult and time-consuming, but it has returned great dividends in

sustaining the trust and commitment of Members States and in decisions by the policy-making organs.

29. The fourth virtue, our ethos of mutual assistance, encourages the sharing of know-how and resources among Members States and by doing so engenders solidarity. In particular, the requests for sharing OPCW expertise in assistance and protection against chemical weapons have increased significantly as a result of concerns about the possible resort by terrorists to chemicals, including to non-Scheduled ones.

30. And finally, as I've mentioned, our collaborative relationship with industry has helped the OPCW develop an effective regime of industrial inspections to ensure the non-proliferation of chemical warfare agents, and also helped to promote the peaceful uses of chemistry. This relationship was strongly reaffirmed in the Industry and Protection Forum that was organised by the OPCW last November and co-sponsored by the European Union, ICCA and CEFIC. The OPCW intends to further strengthen its outreach with industry to make this relationship as productive as possible for the objects and purposes of the Convention.

Outcomes of the Second Review Conference

31. I'll now address a few of the main recommendations and conclusions of the consensus Final Document of the Second Review Conference, which will guide the work of the OPCW during the next five years. The single most important of these is the reaffirmation by States Parties of all of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention as well as their strong commitment to achieving its goal of eliminating chemical weapons. The Conference concluded that the Convention sets new standards for global disarmament and non-proliferation through verification in a non-discriminatory and multilateral manner.

32. The Final Document welcomed the OPCW's activities in relation to assistance and protection against chemical weapons, and recognized this assistance could be a motivating factor for States to join the Convention. It also referred to the possible use of chemical weapons by non-state actors such as terrorists and re-emphasized the continuing relevance and importance of the provisions of Article X of the Convention. Furthermore, the Final Document reaffirmed the importance the Convention attaches

to fostering international cooperation in the peaceful uses of chemistry, and to implementing the Convention in a manner that avoids hampering the economic and technological development of States Parties.

33. Finally, another key outcome I would highlight is the recommendation that the OPCW continue developing a multi-stakeholder approach to promote universality and awareness about the Convention. The final document reaffirmed that raising awareness of all stakeholders about the prohibitions and requirements of the Convention would benefit national implementation. It encouraged the OPCW to continue developing relations and partnerships with relevant regional and international organisations related to chemical safety, chemical industry associations, the private sector and civil society. And it encouraged the development of these relations and partnerships on the broadest possible geographical basis.

34. To implement these recommendations, I have this month authorized the establishment of a special OPCW Trust Fund for voluntary contributions from Members States, which will be used to support the participation in OPCW events by a much broader geographic spectrum of NGOs, specifically from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. I would also take this opportunity to commend a new initiative that has been taken by existing civil society partners of the OPCW to launch a formal NGO coalition, whose goal will be to promote universality and full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention world wide. Taken together, I believe both developments can make a very positive contribution to our common mission of creating a world free of chemical weapons.

Active role of the Host Country

35. Before ending my presentation and opening the floor for questions, I want to underline the important role of our host nation in supporting the OPCW. The tradition of the Netherlands, and specifically of The Hague, has offered a coherent environment for OPCW to develop its programme of work. The Netherlands is committed to multilateralism and to working towards universal adherence to key disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and arrangements. And the achievements of the OPCW I have outlined for you demonstrate the positive results that effective multilateral approaches can bring in this sphere.

36. Considering these advantages, there is great potential here for building conditions that are conducive to promoting multilateralism in the sphere of disarmament and non-proliferation. A proposed concept, to be called The Hague Process, is being developed by the Clingendael Institute with the support of Dutch institutions as well as international partners, including the OPCW. As the city of Peace, Justice and Security, The Hague would provide an ideal venue for such an initiative, especially in view of the number of security-related international organisations that are based in the city.

37. The Hague Process would aim to build synergies between WMD regimes and stakeholders and promote the message that common security is best achieved through multilateral approaches, building on the experience of the OPCW as an example *inter alia*. It would also seek to develop standards and practices for effective multilateralism in the sphere of disarmament and non-proliferation. The process would comprise a series of events including workshops, lectures and trainings organised in The Netherlands as well as other international locations.

38. Let me conclude by stressing my firm conviction that global, regional and national security is impossible without multilateral approaches. Such approaches strengthen international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, and foster conditions to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their related technologies and means of delivery.

39. I would like to once again thank the Clingendael Institute for organising and hosting today's event, and on behalf of the OPCW to express our enthusiasm and support for your efforts to develop The Hague Process. Certainly, given the grave threats to global security at present and the weakening of multilateral security frameworks in recent years, there is a great need for such an initiative.

Thank You.