



**ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION  
OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

**FOURTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF NATIONAL AUTHORITIES**

OPENING REMARKS BY

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OPCW HEADQUARTERS

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Excellencies,

Distinguished representatives of the National Authorities,

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. I warmly welcome all National Authorities and participating delegations, including the representatives of the African Union (AU) and the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), to the Headquarters of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and to this Fourteenth Annual Meeting of National Authorities.
2. Participation in this year's Annual Meeting has exceeded that of previous years. This year's meeting has in attendance 200 representatives of 123 States Parties. I strongly welcome the increased interest in the meeting and we will continue to use this forum which provides an opportunity for National Authorities and the Technical Secretariat to engage with one another on substantive issues arising out of the implementation of the Convention.
3. 2012 was a very dynamic one for all of us involved in the implementation of the CWC. This year we have witnessed the completion of 15 years of the OPCW's operations, as well as the initiation of preparations for the Third Review Conference, scheduled for April 2013, among many other important developments.
4. The outcomes of the Review Conference will undoubtedly have significant bearing on the functioning of the Secretariat as it is expected

to lay out a road map for the long-term future of the Organisation. It will also renew the Secretariat's mission and provide it with important guidance. Under the able guidance of H.E. Ambassador Nassima Baghli of Algeria the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) has begun working in earnest to prepare for the Conference. I commend States Parties for the serious and substantive contribution they are making to this process, which augurs well for the results we all expect. As on previous occasions, it will be expedient for the Third Review Conference to benefit from a range of stakeholders' views and all National Authorities are encouraged to contribute to the discussions of the Group through their Permanent Representations.

5. Turning back to this year's Annual Meeting, we have sought to enrich it even more by covering issues and areas suggested during previous Annual Meetings and have extended the meeting by one day. This year's meeting is also structured along the lines of a series of workshops which are designed to allow participants interact on a range of relevant topics; provide opportunities to exchange views; share experiences on practical matters related to enhancing implementation of the Convention at the regional and subregional levels. As education, outreach and awareness-raising among a broad range of stakeholders will be issues of increasing relevance in the foreseeable future, the Secretariat has also included a break-out panel on these topics on the first day, to stimulate discussions between States Parties and members of the education and outreach in science and technology temporary working group.
6. We expect all these to result in a number of ideas which may be used to further enhance the work of the National Authorities and their engagement with the Secretariat. During this session the Secretariat will

also provide you with an overview of the responses and feedback that we have received from National Authorities and indicate how these have been incorporated into our working practices where they have been found beneficial. I encourage National Authorities to continue to provide us regular feedback on the support and assistance that we extend to States Parties and also their suggestions on new initiatives which will improve national implementation.

7. As many of you may have been informed by your Permanent Representations, several rounds of consultations were convened by the facilitator for Article VII during the year, the purpose has been to, clarify and also receive States Parties' views on the proposed results-oriented incremental approach to facilitating national legislation. I want to assure all States Parties that the approach only aims to facilitate the adoption of the necessary legislation by States Parties that have yet to do so. The views collated across the consultations have been used to further refine the proposal put forth by the Secretariat on the way forward. The proposed approach seems to have broad support, and once endorsed by the States Parties, will serve as the basis upon which the Secretariat would approach the States Parties concerned. As part of the approach the Secretariat is compiling a number of model legislations which are to be made available to these States Parties.
8. The Secretariat has recently initiated an Internship Programme for Legal Drafters and National Authorities' Representatives at the OPCW Headquarters. The Internship Programme is designed to equip legal drafters with the requisite skill and technical capacity to enable them not only compile draft national implementing legislation but also pursue its adoption. The Secretariat provided assistance and support to four

legislative drafters from two States Parties which have not commenced the drafting of their national implementing legislation, to prepare tailor made draft legislation. This new initiative has been well received.

9. The new approach is the topic of Break-out group 2 which is slated to discuss how to achieve effective national implementation and I encourage all National Authorities to share their views. It may also be discussed during the regional group meetings.
10. Before I conclude with the issue of National Implementation, I wish to inform National Authorities that I have signed letters to Foreign Ministers of States Parties concerned urging them to take the appropriate steps to enact the necessary legislations for the implementation of the CWC.
11. Our work in the area of international cooperation, as well as in assistance and protection, has been a key factor in the near-universal adherence that the Convention today enjoys. It is also mainly through international cooperation programmes that we have promoted the implementation of Article VII of the Convention. Indeed a cooperative framework promoting effective implementation of the Convention remains the best means to enhance the security of our individual States Parties and promote confidence within our wider membership. The Secretariat continues to engage 8 countries that are yet to join the Convention while also working closely with the remaining two States Parties which are yet to establish a National Authority.
12. The Secretariat is cognisant of the need to enhance the effectiveness of international cooperation and assistance programmes. For this reason

increased attention has been given to improving evaluation and impact assessment. We look forward to working more closely with National Authorities to ensure that training programmes in particular remain cost effective and yield maximum benefits. I believe that this can be facilitated by better identification of training needs, candidate selection, and post-training follow-up, to ensure the most effective use of acquired knowledge and skills. In a related development the OPCW has been granted membership of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). OPCW's membership of this group will strengthen our quality management practices and ensure that assessments follow principles and norms and provide a framework to review, strengthen, professionalize and improve the quality of the services we provide.

13. In keeping with our determination to make the Organisation more responsive to contemporary needs and expectations, we have continued to conduct meaningful and substantive activities that add further value to our work. This year all three basic courses for New Personnel of National Authorities were held here at the OPCW Headquarters. This exposed the new personnel to the broadest possible understanding of the work of the Secretariat and of the Convention and provided participants with access to the entire range of technical expertise and equipment available at the Secretariat. It also allowed an interaction of representatives from National Authorities from all over the world instead of those in a particular region as had been the case.
  
14. Another initiative introduced by the Secretariat to enhance the technical support and assistance provided to States Parties is the National Authority Mentorship Programme which aims at facilitating exchanges between National Authorities, including the provision of financial

support and technical advice. The Secretariat supported on a pilot basis, partnership between National Authorities of two States Parties. The exchanges are designed to complement the work of the Secretariat by making the knowledge, skills, and experience of the more advanced and experienced National Authorities available to others. The pilot was most successful and the Secretariat expects to promote more of such exchanges. We will continue to explore new ways of delivering support to ensure that States Parties fully benefit from them.

15. In addition to these programmes the Secretariat continues to, dedicate substantial resources to assisting States Parties to achieve the necessary skills and expertise to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities in the areas of legislative drafting; identification of Article VI declarable activities; preparing Article VI declarations; training national escorts for the conduct of OPCW inspections; Assistance and Protection, and capacity building in the area of the peaceful uses of chemistry.
  
16. The Secretariat has, in 2012, continued to present its Associate Programme which provides an intensive training to young engineers and chemists from States Parties around the world. We have launched an Associate Programme Alumni Association through which we hope to leverage continued contact between Associates after their completion of the Programme. We have developed specialised pages dedicated to the Alumni Association on the OPCW website as well as a dedicated Facebook page and a flickr page with pictures of our Associate Programme Alumni. If you are a user of these social networks I would invite you to take a look at the pages and learn more about the Programme and those who have participated in it.

17. In 2012, we have launched another initiative in terms of our training of States parties in the area of Assistance and Protection against chemical weapons. Earlier this month we held the first Training of Trainers Course for First Responders here at the OPCW Headquarters in The Hague. The course was well received by all the participants and has served as a proof of concept for future courses we are intending to hold to Train Trainers in the various disciplines associated with the Convention.
18. On Assistance and Protection, 2012 has also seen the launch of the Network for Victims of Chemical Weapons with a generous donation of voluntary funding from the Islamic republic of Iran. This is an area where there is significant scope for more work by both States Parties and the Technical Secretariat and I hope that we can count on your support in furthering this important initiative.
19. I would also like to mention that we have recently concluded an agreement on Interface Procedures with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) on areas of potential mutual cooperation and possible actions related to the notification and reporting, mobilisation of resources and response to emergency situation involving the use or threat of use of chemical weapons. By working with other International Organisations such as UNOCHA we are endeavouring to ensure that scarce resources are used to their best effect and that in the event of the use of chemical weapons or the accidental release of toxic chemicals, the State Party (or Parties) requesting assistance under Article X of the Convention are provided with the best and most effective response possible. The Secretariat will continue, in the future, to develop



further such relationships and agreements with a view to enhancing our capabilities to assist States Parties when required.

20. Finally, as you may be aware the Secretariat has since last year been working on a number of electronic tools to support the efforts of States Parties. The e-learning project continues to make progress and the first and second modules, covering the history and background of the Convention and the structure and functions of the OPCW are available on the OPCW website. The third module, covering the text of the Convention, has been finalised and will also be available via the website shortly. Part of the recent funding provided to the Secretariat by the European Union (EU) has been earmarked for the development of e-learning tools, more specifically the translation of the e-learning modules into other languages.
21. The Cooperation and Assistance Activities Database, or CAA database, which is accessible to all States Parties via the OPCW External Server, makes it possible for both the Technical Secretariat and the States Parties to share information about activities they have undertaken or intend to carry out. The sharing of information by the Secretariat will further facilitate the work of States Parties and National Authorities helping avoid unnecessary duplication and make our activities more coherent and complementary. I would encourage National Authorities to utilise this important tool for our mutual benefit.
22. Before I conclude I would like to take a moment to convey the gratitude of the Technical Secretariat and States Parties to all who continue to support the implementation of the Convention through voluntary contributions. I wish to assure you that we will always ensure that these contributions are used in the most effective way. The Technical

Secretariat remains committed to reinforcing the assistance it provides to States Parties to meet their obligations and will work with all interested parties in this regard.

23. Your presence here is evidence of the importance that the country you represent attaches to the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Secretariat looks forward to the discussions over the next four days. On our part we will remain vigilant and continue to fulfil the trust reposed in us. We will continue to work to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Secretariat, and to manage the process of change in a way that maximises its positive impact and mitigates any negative consequences.
24. I wish you a most successful meeting and invite you all join me at the reception I will be hosting this evening. I now pass you on to Mark Albon, the new Director of ICA who will take you through the rest of the activities planned for the meeting.
25. Thank you