

***UNITED STATES OF AMERICA***

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***Ceremony Commemorating the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Entry-into-Force of  
the Chemical Weapons Convention***

*United Nations Headquarters, 1 October 2012*

UN Secretary-General Ban, Director-General Üzümcü, Foreign Ministers, Ambassadors, Distinguished Guests, it is indeed a privilege to be here today celebrating 15 years of successful implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Chemical Weapons Convention is an historic achievement in addressing the threat from weapons of mass destruction and has significantly contributed to international peace and security.

From its inception, the Chemical Weapons Convention had two fundamental goals. The first was the destruction of all chemical weapons possessed by the States Parties to the Convention. Tens of thousands of tons of chemical agent have already been destroyed along with millions of associated munitions, and the chemical weapons awaiting destruction remain subject to international oversight. Looking beyond the destruction of remaining chemical weapons stocks, the Chemical Weapons Convention as its second goal embodies a commitment by all States Parties to ensure that chemical weapons never re-emerge to threaten international peace and security. In this regard, I congratulate the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW for maintaining a robust inspection regime and a strong professional commitment to achieving the goals of the Convention.

The continuing importance and unfinished mission of the Convention is underscored by the crisis situation taking place in Syria today. The United States congratulates all 188 States Parties who have chosen to join the Convention. Eight states including Syria have chosen to remain outside of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the United States calls upon all of them to join the Convention without delay.

As the United States begins its preparations for the Third Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention next April, we look forward to working with international partners to ensure that the CWC remains an important instrument for ensuring global peace and security. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to you Mr. Secretary-General, and to you Mr. Director-General for your dedicated efforts to achieve the Convention's fundamental purpose set out in its preamble: "to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons."

Almost a hundred years ago on a World War I battlefield, the scourge of chemical weapons was unleashed upon humanity. The United States remains fully committed to the destruction of every last chemical weapon in the world, ensuring a permanent end to this tragic chapter in human history.

Thank you.