

Mr Chairperson,

Distinguished members of the Scientific Advisory Board,

Dear Colleagues,

1. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the 17th Session of the Scientific Advisory Board.
2. Allow me to recognize in our midst Professor Volodymyr Zaitsev of Ukraine, Professor Florida Arsciwals Cariño from the Philippines and Professor Said Zina of Tunisia who are attending their first session of the SAB since their appointment in 2011. I have no doubt that the combination of their vast experience of activities related to the Convention together with their knowledge will be an asset to the SAB.
3. This session of the SAB will be the last session for three members who are completing their second term of office on the Board. They are Professor Herbert de Bisschop of Belgium, Dr Robert Mathews of Australia, and Professor Jean-Claude Tabet of France. I wish to express my deep appreciation to all three for their dedicated commitment to the important work of the SAB. The services of Professors de Bisschop and Tabet, and Dr Mathews, have helped to advance the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention and I am sure that the Executive Council and indeed all our States Parties share my gratitude to them.
4. We are faced with a time of rapid advances in science and technology. New chemical compounds and production methods are constantly being

researched and discovered, affording the global community many benefits but also bringing with them certain risks. The need to understand these changes and to bring them to the attention of our States Parties has never been greater. The SAB clearly has a vital role to play in this task. Your inputs are crucial to helping the OPCW respond to these new challenges.

5. The CWC is a disarmament treaty tied closely to science. The dynamism of science needs to be reflected in our own work. Every new development that potentially impacts the implementation of the Convention needs to be understood. Such vigilance is vital to ensuring the long-term effectiveness of the Convention's prohibitions. We should therefore maintain and strengthen strong links with the scientific community.
6. Earlier this year, I received the report of the Advisory Panel on Future OPCW Priorities, and also convened an informal retreat for Permanent Representatives to the OPCW. Both the Panel's report and the retreat devoted attention to scientific and technological developments. The Panel's report in particular contained many recommendations pertinent to the SAB. I shall discuss these further with you tomorrow afternoon, as I believe that they are of significance, especially in the preparatory phase for the Third Review Conference in 2013.
7. The SAB will consider the report of the sixth meeting of the temporary working group on sampling and analysis held in The Hague last week. The work carried out by this group continues to be of great importance for the OPCW. I welcome the ongoing cooperation between the OPCW Laboratory and the SAB on the topic of on-site analysis. I

would like also to acknowledge the work which is carried out in the framework of the question of scheduled chemicals, including saxitoxin and ricin, particularly within the correspondence groups. In this regard I would like to convey my appreciation to the members of the temporary working group and its Chairperson, Dr Robin Black from the United Kingdom, as well as to the heads of the correspondence groups for their dedicated work and commitment.

8. The SAB will also consider the report of the first meeting of the temporary working group on the convergence of chemistry and biology also held in The Hague last week. I commend the work of this group, and of its Chairperson, Dr Robert Mathews of Australia. The question of convergence of biology and chemistry is an important question on the agenda of the SAB. It reflects a topic which is mentioned often but about which further clarity would be useful. Experts are of the opinion that there is a growing overlap between chemical and biological production technologies that might have implications for the Chemical Weapons Convention. The SAB is the appropriate body to conduct a thorough study and I look forward to receiving your contributions. Needless to say, your recommendations on how to address the potential implications of this issue for the Convention are keenly awaited. This is a particularly timely study, given the impending Seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention in December.

9. The inter-sessional periods are important. I recognize that SAB members are busy with their normal work, but I believe that there is further scope to take forward work between the formal SAB sessions, not only in the context of the Temporary Working Groups, but also on the other substantive questions, some of which are handled by

correspondence groups. It is important that all members of the SAB contribute their expertise. The Secretariat stands ready to provide support, both during the inter-sessional periods and in preparation for the Working Group meetings and formal sessions. I also encourage Secretariat staff members who have undertaken to provide presentations or conduct analysis, to do so at an early point in time.

10. Regarding other issues on the SAB's agenda, I look forward to receiving a final version of a factsheet on saxitoxin. I also appreciate the work of the correspondence group preparing a similar fact sheet on ricin, and hope that this too can soon be finalised. As regards the question of captive use of schedule 1 chemicals, the Technical Secretariat will brief the SAB on recent developments and its outreach to States Parties and industry associations. I hope that this briefing will assist the SAB in its deliberations.
11. The scope of the definition of "production by synthesis" under Part IX of the Verification Annex is another important issue. I note that the Sixteenth session of the SAB decided to study the current chemical-industry practice with respect to biologically-mediated processes, and will receive a report at its current session. At its Sixteenth session, the SAB discussed some scientific and technical aspects relating to incapacitating chemical agents. Your initial assessment and recommendations on this matter will be important since this subject has often been raised in academic studies and occasionally at the OPCW.
12. Also at its Sixteenth session, the SAB discussed the issue of novel toxic compounds. The SAB recommended that the OPCW expand its knowledge of such chemicals in order to assist States Parties to fulfill

their obligations. This matter also underlines the critical role that SAB is expected to play now and in the future.

13. At a time of significant scientific and technological change, outreach to the scientific community assumes greater importance. I addressed a letter to your Chairperson conveying to him that I was considering, in the framework of a strategy for the stakeholders of the Convention, ways of enhancing the involvement of the scientific community in the promotion of the goals of the Convention. Your advice and counsel on this matter will be important to help us understand how to reach out to the scientific community and develop and enhance our relationships. In this connection, I note with appreciation that the European Union is planning to fund the convening of a temporary working group on education and outreach in 2013.

14. With regard to the preparation of your report that I will submit, as a contribution on developments in science and technology, to the Third Review Conference I am pleased to note that planning is well underway for the convening of an IUPAC Workshop that will assist the SAB in preparing that report. You will recall that IUPAC undertook similar endeavours in preparation for the First and Second Review Conferences. I express my appreciation to Spiez Laboratory of Switzerland, and to Mr Stefan Mogl, for the very helpful offer to host the workshop at their premises in February 2012. While the OPCW will contribute some of the funding (especially to encourage broad participation), the workshop is independently organized by IUPAC. Given the tight timing leading up to the Third Review Conference, it is important that the workshop takes place as planned in February, and I trust that IUPAC will be sending out invitations very shortly.

15. As you already know, the Secretariat organized a Conference on International Cooperation and Chemical Safety and Security in The Hague on 12 and 13 September 2011. The Conference was intended to promote the objectives of the International Year of Chemistry. Building on this and other related events, I intend to set out an overarching approach for work relating to chemical safety and security.
16. At the end of October, the Secretariat, in cooperation with the governments of Australia and Thailand, organized an exercise in order to test its preparedness to conduct a challenge inspection under Article IX of the Convention. While independent evaluation of this EU-funded exercise is underway, useful lessons have already been identified by the Secretariat planning team.

Distinguished members of SAB,

17. This Board represents a wealth of experience and scientific expertise, and your contributions will be influential as the OPCW navigates through a time of institutional transition. I am keen to ensure robust engagement between the Secretariat and the SAB. To further support this, I have proposed the creation of a post of Science Policy Adviser from 2012, for which recruitment will commence following the approval of the draft budget for 2012.
18. For the draft budget for 2012, I also proposed financing from the regular budget for an additional session of the SAB.
19. As for the trust fund, I would like to express my gratitude to the twelve

States Parties and to the European Union for their generous contributions to the fund.

20. In this age of austerity it is especially important that we have a clear, transparent, and robust approach to financial management. In advance of the next session of the SAB, I ask the Secretary to the SAB to clarify, if necessary, the arrangements for travel costs.
21. I do believe that it is also important to engage with States Parties and to interact with them closely. Enhancing their understanding and appreciation of the SAB's important work will undoubtedly create greater receptivity for your recommendations. In this regard, I appreciate the briefing which the Chairperson and Dr Black gave to the Executive Council at its Sixth-Fifth session. A similar briefing to the Conference of the States Parties at its upcoming Sixteenth Session is a welcome gesture.
22. I wish to conclude my remarks by stressing once again my deep appreciation for the dedication that the members of the SAB continue to show to their mission and their work. Your mandate and the unique expertise you offer are crucial for ensuring the continued success and relevance of the Chemical Weapons Convention and its verification regime.
23. It is with this awareness of the special task that you have before you, that I wish you a successful session.