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ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION
OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

ADDRESS BY

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AT

THE SEMINAR ON THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION AND
CHEMICAL-SAFETY-AND-SECURITY MANAGEMENT
FOR MEMBER STATES OF THE REGION OF
SOUTHEAST AND SOUTH ASIA

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
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1. Datouk Hamidon Ali, Chairman National Authority, representatives from Member States, distinguished guests and participants of the seminar,

2. First of all I wish to say how happy I am to be visiting Malaysia and to attend this seminar which is organized by the National Authority of Malaysia and OPCW with collaboration from the Department of Occupational Safety and Health, Ministry of Human Resource and Pharmaceutical Service Division, Ministry of Health. Celebrating Malaysia's progress and development is a tribute to the commitment of its leadership and its people to their betterment. I would like to seize this opportunity to commend the Government of Malaysia for its longstanding support to advancing the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the tangible contribution it is making to substantive programmes of direct relevance to the successful implementation of the Convention. Malaysia has shown steadfast commitment to our collective vision of a world free of chemical weapons as well as a world in which cooperation in the peaceful uses of chemistry is consistently encouraged and fostered.

3. Malaysia has contributed significantly to the implementation of a variety of capacity-building activities. In 2011 alone, Malaysia hosted a national chemical safety seminar and supported related activities in the areas of national implementation and assistance and protection against chemical weapons. Also during the course of last year, Malaysia extended its support to the Associate Programme by offering industry placements which was a highly valued experience by the participating associates. Associates appreciated the warmth and hospitality that they received in

the two companies namely CCM Chemicals and Optimal Chemicals. In 2012, for the first time ever, Malaysia will also host a pilot initiative for African States to provide specialised training on chemical analysis and product development of natural products.

4. The region has a growing chemical industry and matters relating to chemical safety and security are thus of great importance.
5. Most of you have travelled from far to discuss this subject, exchange experiences and to share national and regional practices. It is above all your contributions – your deliberations, comments and suggestions - that will contribute to advancing the objectives of this seminar - to make the handling and production of chemicals safer and to promote a chemical safety and security culture. To assist you in your deliberations and sharing of knowledge and experience we have invited today a number of experts in this field who you are familiar with - Mr David Moore, Mr Mike Snakard and Mr. Peter Boehme. I welcome these experts at today's meeting and thank them for sharing their expertise and to providing their strong support to the convening of a series of six OPCW seminars on this important topic.
6. The objective of this seminar is to bring together representatives from chemical industry as well as government officials to discuss and consider current approaches to chemical safety and security, exchange experiences and review best practices. Given the significant development of the chemical industry in this region and in response to the needs of industry and enterprises, this seminar sets a particular emphasis on the consideration of the safety and security culture in small and medium-sized chemical enterprises. The challenges and circumstances these

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companies are facing in their day-to-day application of safety and security practices as well as possible ways forward in this regard will be addressed. The success of this endeavour hinges, above all, upon the strong collaboration among the various stakeholders at the regional as well as national levels. I am confident that this seminar will allow all of you to establish and maintain an enduring network of stakeholders that are involved in and can exchange valuable experiences in chemical safety and security management.

7. This year - 2012 - marks 15 years of operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Convention has brought valuable benefits to its States Parties and has made significant contributions to advancing the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation.
8. The Convention is known for its four main pillars which guide its implementation: The first pillar - pertaining to the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles and chemical weapons production facilities - is a core element of the CWC.
9. The second pillar - referred to as the non-proliferation of chemical weapons - plays a critical role in ensuring that the Convention remains a durable barrier against the re-emergence of chemical weapons and the misuse of toxic chemicals. Chemical industry is a key stakeholder of the Convention and we greatly appreciate the longstanding successful collaboration with our industry partners in the implementation of this pillar of the Convention, which, among other activities, entails the routine inspection of chemical industry facilities worldwide. This seminar, which aims at promoting a chemical safety and security culture in the region,

also makes an important contribution to the OPCW's efforts in the implementation of this second pillar of the CWC.

10. In accordance with the third pillar - the assistance and protection against chemical weapons - each State Party has the right to request the OPCW or other Member State for assistance and protection against the use, or threat of use, of chemical weapons. Such assistance can include, among other measures, the provision of technical equipment such as chemical agent detectors, protective clothing, decontamination equipment, and medical assistance.

11. Finally, we are continuously working towards strengthening our international cooperation programmes which are widely regarded as an important aspect of our work. At the heart of this fourth pillar of the Convention lies the objective of furthering knowledge and promoting progress in the field of the peaceful uses of chemistry and its manifold benefits for society and economy. The OPCW's international cooperation efforts cover a range of areas in this regard including sponsorship programmes in chemical research, the development of laboratory capacity, and the specialised training in the safe management of chemicals, to which this seminar makes a contribution. The Organisation's activities in this area have promoted confidence in compliance with the Convention's obligations.

12. In taking stock of the Convention's implementation and operation over the past 15 years, States Parties can look back on continuous and significant progress made. The Convention has come close to obtaining universal adherence, with a membership that currently stands at 188 countries, making it one of the disarmament and non-proliferation treaties

with the fastest rate of accession in this field. The CWC and the OPCW are, indeed, regarded as a successful example in disarmament and non-proliferation. Let me also welcome Mr. Win Naing, who is the representative from Myanmar, with whom I had a useful meeting this morning. As I also told him earlier, we hope to welcome Myanmar as our 189th State Party

13. With the major task of the destruction of chemical weapon stockpiles nearing completion in the foreseeable future, we are also reflecting on ways to strengthen the long-term mission of the OPCW. The OPCW is and will remain the only international mechanism to ensure that chemical weapons will never again re-emerge. At the same time there are expectations that the Organisation will play its part in a wider yet relevant promotional effort that includes Chemical Safety and Security and the protection against the misuse of toxic chemicals.

14. Here I wish to mention with appreciation the strong support the Convention has received in ASEAN as well the ASEAN Regional Forum. At the Fourth ARF Inter Sessional Meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ISM-NPD) held in Sydney in March 2012, the participants 'expressed strong support for the CWC and their appreciation for the verification work of the OPCW'. They also affirmed the importance of cooperation between the ARF and the OPCW. I look forward to working closely with members of both these important forums in the run up to the ARF Summit in July as well as the Third Review Conference of the CWC to be held in April next year.

15. The benefits derived from the OPCW's activities in the field of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of chemistry was an

important incentive for many countries to join the Convention and remains a motivation for their continued engagement. We look forward to deepening our international cooperation programmes while ensuring that these are optimised to serve the Convention's effective implementation. States Parties also believe that the emerging focus on chemical safety and security should become one of the components of the effort to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons and the misuse of toxic chemicals.

16. Global economic development and prosperity go hand in hand with the growth and expansion of chemical industry. Accordingly, many Member States, whose economies are developing or in transition, have emerging and increasingly complex chemical industries. As numerous chemical processes involve the use of toxic substances, this increasing complexity and growth can pose a serious challenge in case of accidents and incidents or in the event of the misuse of toxic chemicals with a malicious intent.

17. Incidents that took place in the recent past in several countries clearly demonstrate the devastating and long term impact on human health, environment and business that can arise from incidents stemming from poor safety management in chemical industry. Indeed, much of what constitutes the internationally recognised standards of safety management in chemical industry has been developed as direct responses to events such as these.

18. Many emerging economies have a mix of small and large chemical facilities. While the large companies are better organised and have the necessary knowledge and resources to mitigate possible risks and threats, the small and medium enterprises require more guidance, support and training in this field. The chemical safety and security initiative has been

designed to assist in ensuring that small and medium-sized chemical facilities especially continue to operate in a safe environment after assessing all the risks involved.

19.As recognised by the United Nations, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction constitutes one of the most pressing challenges to global peace and security. It is vital that chemical plants focus on safe and secure handling of chemicals, especially those that fall under the OPCW's classification of so-called "scheduled chemicals". This also serves to mitigate any potential risk of diversion for terrorist purposes. It is therefore of utmost importance to raise awareness for and sensitize all stakeholders to any potential risks and to provide our partners in the chemical industries with the knowledge and tools to ensure safe and secure transportation, storage, handling and use of chemicals.

20.The Chemical Safety and Security Programme, which addresses these needs, is now a regular part of international cooperation activities of the OPCW. The Organisation has hosted a total of 215 participants in nine events under its auspices over the course of three years. This has been made possible by the strong support and voluntary contributions from the Member States and multilateral institutions. I hope for an even further enhanced networking arrangement within the region to ensure a sustained learning and sharing among the stakeholders.

21.The programme for this seminar is wide-ranging and benefits considerably from the presence of both governmental and private sector representatives, who bring to this forum a rich diversity of experience and knowledge. We can look forward to a most fruitful exchange of views, a learning experience learning experience for all involved as well as tangible action points that will take matters further. The readiness and

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enthusiasm with which this seminar was welcomed and supported by Malaysian partners demonstrates the commitment to promotion of chemical safety and security in the region and all over the world.

22.I wish you successful deliberations and I am confident that your inputs and support will contribute to a successful seminar. I thank you for your attention.

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