



**ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION
OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR GRACE ASIRWATHAM
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AT THE

**FOURTEENTH REGIONAL MEETING OF
NATIONAL AUTHORITIES OF STATES PARTIES
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

QUITO, ECUADOR 25 JUNE 2013

**Dear Representatives from the National Authorities,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Fourteenth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties in Latin America and the Caribbean. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Ecuador for its warm and generous hospitality. I also wish to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ecuador and the National Authority for organising this event together with the OPCW and for the excellent arrangements that have been made.
2. I also warmly welcome the representative of CARICOM at this meeting. His presence highlights the importance that regional and sub-regional organisations attach to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW, and, more generally, to matters related to CBRN non-proliferation in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540.
3. As you all know the role of a National Authority is central to the implementation of the CWC. A well-functioning National Authority is the backbone of any country's implementation efforts. The day-to-day work of National Authorities is thus vital to the advancement of the goals and objectives of the Convention in the region.
4. The OPCW's regional meetings are intended to provide a forum for representatives of National Authorities to review and discuss issues related to the practical implementation of the Convention, to share experiences and best practices and to foster regional cooperation for the implementation of the Convention. At each regional meeting we strive

to structure the programme around the themes which are of interest to States of the region.

5. You can indeed take satisfaction in your region's implementation record for Article VII obligations, as all of the 33 States Parties of the region have either designated or established their National Authorities. The "GRULAC" is a diverse region with States Parties in both Latin America and the Caribbean. Such diversity can also be reflected in various administrative and legal systems which in turn can give rise to different approaches to the implementation of the Convention. This challenge can be overcome by the continuous close collaboration among States Parties of the region and their National Authorities towards achieving the common objective of a world free of chemical weapons.
6. The Technical Secretariat of the OPCW monitors and analyses the needs of States Parties in implementing the Convention. Such assessments are useful in order to prepare tailor-made activities to facilitate the States Parties to continue to advance their implementation. I would like to mention in particular the internship for legal drafters in this regard; this initiative was launched in 2012 and will continue to be implemented in 2013. The internship consists of a one-week programme held at the OPCW Headquarters during which legal drafters from selected States Parties come together to receive intensive training in the drafting of national implementing legislation.
7. There is an all-time requirement to consistently strive to improve the accuracy, quality and timeliness of Article VI declarations. As the profile of the chemical industry in your countries is constantly evolving, it is important that National Authorities regularly monitor such

developments, reach out to any new chemical industries that are being set up and raise awareness for the requirements and obligations under the Convention. National Authorities are the key interlocutors for interaction with the chemical industry which is essential to CWC implementation.

8. In order to assist States Parties in preparing their declarations the Secretariat offers specialised tools and training courses. In July 2010, the OPCW conducted an advanced training course for National Authorities personnel of States Parties in the GRULAC region in Madrid, Spain, regarding the preparation of electronic declarations. The workshop trained participants in the use of the EDNA software, which was developed by the OPCW to allow for preparing and submitting Article VI declarations electronically. EDNA is provided free of charge to States Parties and helps to eliminate errors in preparing and submitting such declarations.
9. The Technical Secretariat has consistently improved EDNA and it has now completed EDNA version 2.5, which is the latest update of this useful software. In less than two months, in August of this year, the OPCW will convene a Regional Training Course for the National Authorities of States Parties in the GRULAC region, that are involved in fulfilling Article VI Declarations requirements under the Convention, in Mexico City.
10. Another area that requires attention is the creation of effective coordination mechanisms within each of your countries to monitor the trade in chemicals. There is a need for a multi-agency approach at the national level that involves National Authorities, customs, border and licensing agencies. Many of the “smaller” States Parties in this region

may not produce large amounts of chemical products themselves, but, due to their geographical location along the trade routes of the region, they may be exposed to high volumes of imports/exports of products that are to be declared or reported in accordance with the Convention; transshipment; and “free zone” activities. Such situations require enhanced awareness and skills on the part of customs authorities, and their close cooperation with the National Authorities, in order to fulfil their essential role in implementing the transfers regime of the Convention including detecting and reporting any chemicals prohibited under the Convention.

11. The Technical Secretariat conducts annual regional training courses for customs authorities in order to impart to them the latest information and expertise necessary for the implementation of the transfers regime under Article VI of the Convention.

12. As all of you would be aware, we recently witnessed the successful conclusion of the Third Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention. On this occasion, States Parties once again underlined their commitment to the goals and objectives of the Convention and their determination to preserve the CWC as an effective bulwark against chemical weapons for the future.

13. The Review Conference has produced a substantive and meaningful outcome document; it combines a review of the Convention’s operation with substantive forward-looking elements. This consensus outcome provides guidance for our work in the coming years. States Parties also acknowledged the role of the Chemical Weapons Convention in contributing to global peace and security and recognized the CWC as a proven model in disarmament.

14. The OPCW's International Cooperation and Assistance (ICA) programmes continue to provide technical support and capacity building for all National Authorities to help meet their obligations under the Convention. Based on regular monitoring and evaluation, the Technical Secretariat continues to improve the effectiveness of these programmes and to develop new approaches in order to respond to States Parties' needs. The GRULAC region has been very supportive of ICA activities and has actively participated in its programmes, and I am confident that the Organisation can continue to rely on your commitment and cooperation.

15. In closing, allow me to wish you a successful meeting. I also would like to wish the entire region a successful and complete implementation of the Convention in order for all of us to work together to create a world free of chemical weapons.

Thank you.