



**Statement by H.E. Mr. Kevin Kelly**

**Permanent Representative of Ireland to the Organisation for the Prohibition of  
Chemical Weapons**

**At the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties  
to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention**

**21-30 November 2018**

Mr Chairperson

1. At the outset, I would like to express our congratulations to you, Ambassador Agustin Vasquez Gomez on your appointment as the Chairperson of the Fourth Review Conference. I would also like to express our appreciation to Ambassador I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja, Chairperson of the Open Ended Working Group for the preparation of the RC-4, and Ambassador Jana Reinisova, Chairperson of the Executive Council, for their skilful efforts in guiding the preparatory work for this meeting.
2. Ireland would also like to take this opportunity to commend the professionalism and efforts of the OPCW Technical Secretariat under the leadership of its Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias. Your stewardship and guidance will be invaluable in these critical times. Ireland welcomes your personal commitment to mainstream a gender perspective in the work of the Organisation and we will continue to strive for - and underline the importance of - the equal participation of women and men in all disarmament discussions and decisions. Looking ahead, we believe that this Organisation's work would be enhanced by focusing on the nexus between disarmament and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, we welcome the focus on gender in the Secretary General's Agenda on Disarmament.
3. Ireland fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I will add the following in a national capacity.

Mr Chairperson

4. The international community is at a critical juncture in the fight to uphold the international norm against chemical weapons use. The use of chemical weapons in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia and more recently in Salisbury in the U.K. has seriously threatened to undermine the universal prohibition on the use of chemical weapons, as enshrined in the Convention. The use of these weapons is an affront to the international rules-based system on which we all depend for our security and wellbeing. Impunity cannot prevail with respect to such serious crimes.
5. Ireland has been clear and unequivocal in our condemnation of these attacks. My Delegation is however equally firm in our belief that the widespread condemnation of those who breach their obligations under the CWC must be followed up by action, and that to safeguard against impunity those responsible for these abhorrent attacks against humanity must be held to account. The failure to ensure effective accountability only serves to embolden those who dare to use them.
6. In that regard, we commend the United Kingdom's leadership in calling for the Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the CWC in June this year and we welcome the Decision of this meeting. By enhancing the capacity and capabilities of the OPCW to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria and, by request, elsewhere, this decision will strengthen the implementation of CWC and help to end impunity for the use of these weapons. We express full confidence in the integrity and objectivity of the OPCW Technical Secretariat to fulfil this new role.
7. My delegation also commends France for its political leadership in creating the *International Partnership Against the Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons*. Through the promotion of greater information sharing about chemical weapons use, including sanctions information, the Partnership has a crucial role to play in supporting and complementing existing organisations and mechanisms and in helping to strengthen the capacity of states to hold responsible parties accountable.

Mr Chairperson

8. In the period since the Third Review Conference we have witnessed a marked increase in the use of chemical weapons and a failure of the UNSC to renew the mandate of the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to hold perpetrators of these crimes to account. Ending impunity for the use of chemical weapons must be at the heart of our efforts in this Fourth Review Conference.
9. It is clear that the international community cannot afford to continue without an attribution mechanism to identify perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons. Accountability is vital to deter the potential acceptance of the use of CW as weapons of war and terror. We appeal to all States Parties to unite and intensify efforts to uphold the global norm against chemical weapons.
10. Ireland was pleased to support the resolution on chemical weapons at this year's First Committee and would like to commend Poland for their efforts in ensuring the resolution passed, again with a strong majority. Ireland has long supported and trusted the efforts and work of the OPCW, including the work of the JIM, the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) and we stress the importance of full compliance with the CWC and its declaration and verification regime.

Mr Chairperson,

11. As the 21<sup>st</sup> century advances, so too does the world's capability to develop new technology. In this context, it is important to recognise new developments in the use of chemistry, as well as new types of potential chemical weapons agents, to ensure sufficient protections are put in place to keep the global community safe from chemical attacks. We need to remain vigilant and ensure that our Convention can keep pace with new advancements in chemical weapons.
12. While responding to new challenges, securing universal adherence to the CWC must also remain a top priority. We encourage all states who have yet to join the Convention to do so without further delay.

Mr Chairperson,

13. It is utterly unacceptable that over a century after their first use, chemical weapons are still being used to inflict such cruel harm on combatants, civilians, and most devastatingly, on children. The images and footage of innocent children suffering in the aftermath of these attacks cannot fail to leave a lasting imprint on those who view them. There must be no impunity for such grave violations of international law.
  
14. The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu has stated that 'Chemical weapons are a relic of the past and must remain so', a view which we fully endorse. The development and use of chemical weapons, including the use of any toxic chemicals as weapons, by anyone - state or non-state - is absolutely unacceptable and must be both rigorously condemned by the international community and punished to the full extent of international law. Wilful defiance of the CWC cannot be allowed to go unchallenged.
  
15. In closing, I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Conference and be published on the OPCW website and extranet.

Thank You