



SLOVENIA

Statement

by Sabina Stadler Repnik,

**Director – General for Multilateral Affairs, Development Cooperation and
International Law at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia**

at the Forth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention

The Hague, 21 – 30 November 2018

Mr Chairperson, Director General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by expressing our **sincere appreciation** to *Ambassador Puja* who tirelessly worked with States Parties to prepare the draft conclusions that we are going to further discuss and negotiate during these days under clear guidance from *Ambassador Gomez* chairing the Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. *I would also like to commend all the work done by the Director General Ambassador Arias and his team to prepare for the Conference in the short period since he has taken on his new role.*

In addition to what has been said by Jacek Bylica, EU Special Envoy for Non-proliferation and Disarmament on behalf of the European Union, I would like to make several remarks in my **national capacity**.

These days we are **commemorating the Centennial Anniversary of the End of the First World War**, during which chemicals were used as a weapon of mass destruction for the first time, including on our soil in the surroundings of Bovec

(Battles of Isonzo) in 1917. It is with great **regret and condemnation** that we have to realize that the **use of chemical weapons has in last years returned in its full scope**, which is utterly unacceptable.

We all have to do more to fight it.

This is why Slovenia appreciates and **supports the professional, independent and impartial work of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW**, Fact-Finding Mission and its Declarations Assessment Team. **Strengthening the capability of the Organization established to help states implement the CWC in preventing the use, proliferation and impunity for the use of chemical weapons, must be the primary response to the global re-emergence of chemical weapons use.**

The adopted budget for 2019 will enable the Technical Secretariat to **adjust their work to the present challenges**, including by **implementing the decision**¹ taken at the Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention last June, which Slovenia fully supports.

Mr Chairperson,

It is imperative for the OPCW to be able to **identify the perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks** in Syria, to provide regular **reports** on its investigations to the OPCW Executive Council and to the UN Secretary General for their consideration and increase its **capabilities in global attribution**.

Slovenia has been **among the initiators of and is contributing financially to the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM)** to assist in investigating and prosecuting international crimes committed in Syria, as an important step in efforts to further accountability. It would be necessary for them to have **access to the archives of the JIM**, and we welcome the efforts and

¹ Decision C-SS-4/DEC.3 dated 27 June 2018 entitled "Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons";

arrangements between the OPCW and IIM to exchange information, taking into account confidentiality rules.

Slovenia firmly believes that the **use of chemical weapons**, including the use of any toxic chemicals as weapons, by State or non-State actors is **unacceptable, represents a breach of international law, and may amount to a war crime or a crime against humanity**. It must thus be strongly condemned. The responsibility of the international community is to **allow for no impunity** and to identify and hold accountable the perpetrators of such acts.

Additionally to that, Slovenia has **joined the International Partnership against Impunity for the use of Chemical Weapons** in April this year and we see our work there as **complementary to the work within the OPCW**.

Mr Chairperson,

Slovenia is concerned about the **risk of non-state actors acquiring WMD's**, chemical weapons included. We have therefore supported UNSC Resolution 1540, its subsequent resolutions and the work of the 1540 Committee to strengthen global capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to the use of WMD for terrorist purposes. We expanded the **Slovenia-led Western Balkan Counter-Terrorism initiative (WBCTi)** which links up individual initiatives in this area into a joint, comprehensive effort, into the **Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) concept**, which includes prevention of violent extremism and the fight against terrorism as well as measures against organised crime and those aimed at border security.

Within the OPCW we welcome the work of the **Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and the Sub-Working Group on Non State Actors** and their outcomes including on the need to upgrade national chemical safety and security to prevent re-emergence of chemical weapons as well as misuse of toxic chemicals.

Mr Chairperson,

Following latest developments we call for **enhanced verification**, including verification of the substances that should be added **to the CWC lists of controlled substances**. In this regard we support the initiative to add to the list **two new chemical agent families**.

We should not forget that the June decision also refers to capacity building, **international cooperation and assistance**, including assistance to States Parties in the area of chemical security and implementation of the CWC, which makes it even more important for us to implement it.

This is why Slovenia supports the upgrade of the **Laboratory and the Equipment Store to a Centre for Chemistry and Technology** and is considering a **voluntary contribution for the upgrade of the Laboratory and the Equipment Store to a Centre for Chemistry and Technology**. While Slovenia does not have a designated OPCW laboratory, we are convinced that the upgraded one of the OPCW will be of use to all countries.

I cannot emphasize enough that we have to do as much as we can to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons or toxic chemicals as weapons. To this end Slovenia will continue to support **activities directed at the prohibition of the use of aerosolised chemicals acting on the central nervous system for law enforcement purposes**.

Mr Chairperson, Director General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me work my way towards conclusion by saying that I firmly believe in and support all endeavours taking the OPCW and its member states towards achieving **gender equality**. Equal participation and leadership of women in decision making and action in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament is important for achieving peace and security.

Mr Chairperson,

As we celebrate the End of the First World War, I regret most profoundly that a new generation has experienced the horrors of chemical weapons. Let's make sure it is the last one.

I ask that my full statement be issued as an official document of the Conference and published on the OPCW website.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.