



OPCW

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GERMANY

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR RUDIGER BOHN DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF
THE FEDERAL GERMAN GOVERNMENT FOR DISARMAMENT AND ARMS
CONTROL AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE
STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS
CONVENTION**

Mr Chairman,
Director-General,
Ministers,
Excellences,
Colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

Let me first congratulate you, Mr Chairman, on your election as Chairperson of this important Conference and assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support.

I would also like to pay tribute to the excellent work of His Excellency Ambassador Puja of Indonesia in his capacity as Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group, as well as to Her Excellency Ambassador Jana Reinišová, who chaired the Executive Council sessions in preparation of this Conference. Likewise, I would like to congratulate the Director-General, His Excellency Ambassador Fernando Arias, for his able leadership of the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat.

Mr Chairman,

This Fourth Review Conference takes place at a critical juncture. Over the past years, the global ban on chemical weapons use has been broken time and again – repeatedly in Syria, but also in Iraq, in Malaysia and, most recently, in the United Kingdom. It is our responsibility as States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention to react and to ensure that adequate measures are in place to identify those responsible.

That is why it is such an important and, indeed, necessary achievement that the June Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties took action and addressed the threat from chemical weapons use.

Let us be very clear: only by implementing this decision will we regain credibility after the repeated use of chemical weapons during the last review cycle. We have the opportunity and



are under the obligation to strengthen the OPCW and keep the clear and unambiguous stigma against chemical weapons intact. Let us work together to this effect over the course of the next week and a half.

And let me be clear on another issue: my Government is convinced that the adoption of the June decision was entirely legitimate and in accordance with the provisions of the convention and the rules of procedure. The number of States Parties attending the Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties alone sent the clear signal that an overwhelming majority felt the urgency to act on repeated violations of the Convention. Article Eight of the Convention unambiguously allows for decisions taken by vote if consensus is not possible.

For a strong global ban on chemical weapons, we need the strong support of the OPCW. Among other things, this means making arrangements to investigate instances swiftly and accurately, and to share information on chemical weapons use with United Nations investigative bodies.

We therefore welcome yesterday's decision by the Conference of the States Parties on next year's budget that provides for the necessary resources.

Mr Chairman,

The task of this conference is not easy: we need to provide guidance to the OPCW for the next five years.

The Chemical Weapons Convention has seen many successes in the area of complete, verified destruction of all declared chemical weapons. Germany is glad that it could assist in the destruction of declared Syrian stockpiles and lend its support to Iraq and Libya to destroy their declared chemical weapons.

Despite the success of the Chemical Weapons Convention, some risks remain. Arms control and disarmament must rely not only on mutual trust, but also on transparency and a commitment to the rules which have been developed and enshrined in the Convention. All States Parties must therefore honour their own commitments.

Therefore, we welcome the expertise and diligence of the Technical Secretariat, which is strictly committed to professional work on the basis of verifiable facts. This includes the professional and impartial activities of the Fact-Finding Missions, the Declaration Assessment Team, as well as the Technical Assistance Missions. We wish to further strengthen and support the Technical Secretariat and the Director-General, in order to make the OPCW fit for present and future challenges. The Director-General should indeed have the necessary flexibility to retain the required expertise of staff, while at the same time respecting the fact that the OPCW is a non-career organisation.

Permit me to highlight briefly some further aspects where we feel there is common understanding amongst States Parties:

Over the coming years, we will need to address rising challenges by non-state actors. States Parties reached a decision on this subject in the Executive Council last October. Let us continue to implement it.

We all agree on the need for capacity development, as a necessary tool to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention. We support a needs-based approach and are willing to support States Parties in their national implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, be it in the area of preparedness, industry oversight or other aspects relevant to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Germany will contribute substantially to the respective Trust Fund in the coming days. We also welcome the establishment of the Rapid Response and Assistance Mission.

Another aspect in the area of capacity building is the planned upgrade to the OPCW Laboratory. The same is true for establishing a network of designated laboratories, if possible with labs in all five geographical regions. Germany stands ready to support these activities.

Mr Chairman,

We should strive to bring this Review Conference to a meaningful conclusion. It is our joint obligation, as committed States Parties of this important Convention, and our responsibility to our countries and our citizens.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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