



OPCW

Review Conference

Fourth Session
21 – 30 November 2018

RC-4/NAT.31
30 November 2018
ENGLISH only

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR KENNETH D. WARD
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
TO THE OPCW AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF
THE STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE CHEMICAL
WEAPONS CONVENTION UNDER AGENDA ITEM 11**

We've seen here over the past two weeks that the majority of States Parties agree with the importance of the OPCW – States have overwhelmingly agreed to keep the Organisation running with a reasonable, short term increase to its budget. One of the key benefits of the OPCW to the international community is its stalwart defence of the norm against chemical weapons use and the action it has taken to respond to chemical use.

Taking action is key to holding States accountable, whether it is related to chemical weapons use or other malign activities.

In the United States national statement, I highlighted Russia's and Syria's blatant disregard for their international obligations and particularly the norm against the use of chemical weapons, and I provided examples of Iran's violations of the Chemical Weapons Convention. I also talked about the importance of taking action to counter this behaviour. The United States believes it is important to speak up for the record and to comment about the fitness of these States for leadership positions at the OPCW.

In particular, the United States believes that malign States such as Iran and Venezuela should not have been elected to Vice-Chair positions at the OPCW Review Conference.

Allowing such States leadership positions in the OPCW demeans the Chemical Weapons Convention and undermines its credibility, and it also undermines our collective effort to uphold the norm against chemical weapons use.

We encourage governments to join us in this approach as part of our broader efforts to hold countries accountable for their disregard for their international obligations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I ask that my statement be designated an official document of this Review Conference and posted on the external server and the public website.

--- 0 ---

