

NATIONAL STATEMENT OF TURKEY TO BE DELIVERED BY AMBASSADOR ŞABAN DİŞLİ, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TURKEY TO THE OPCW

Mr Chairperson,
Mr Director General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, I would like to extend my congratulations to Ambassador Krassimir Kostov of Bulgaria, on his election as the Chairperson of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Conference of States Parties. Mr Chairperson, you have our full support for the successful conclusion of this meeting.

I would also like to thank the Director-General Ambassador Fernando Arias for his comprehensive report and commend the professionalism of the OPCW Secretariat in fulfilling the mandate of the Organization.

Excellencies,
Dear Colleagues,

Active participation in international efforts for disarmament and prevention of weapons of mass destruction proliferation, adherence to relevant international instruments and their full implementation are important elements of Turkey's foreign and security policy. Accordingly, Turkey is party to all non-proliferation instruments.

We fully support the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in its efforts for a world free of chemical weapons.

The OPCW and the Chemical Weapons Convention remain crucial pillars of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

This is exactly why the Organisation should be provided the necessary resources to continue its effective implementation of the tasks under the Convention.

In this context, Turkey supports the draft programme and budget as proposed by the Director-General and recommended by the 92nd session of the Executive Council for adoption by the Conference.

The budget proposal is reasonable and it will enable the Technical Secretariat to perform its important tasks under the Convention in 2020.

Dear Colleagues,

Turkey highly appreciates the active role played by the OPCW in the destruction of chemical weapons, preventing their re-emergence as well as promoting international cooperation for the development of chemical industry.

As a committed member, Turkey maintains a long-term and close cooperation with the Organisation. The voluntary contribution by the Turkish Government to the ChemTech Centre Project symbolizes the importance Turkey attaches to the Organisation and our support for its work.

The transformation of the OPCW laboratory into a Centre for Chemistry and Technology will be a remarkable progress in the Organisation's capacity to perform its core tasks in verification, inspection and capacity-building. The ChemTech Centre will be a valuable resource for the OPCW and its members.

We are looking forward to the timely and smooth completion of the ChemTech Centre.

Distinguished representatives,

Any use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances is unacceptable.

No tolerance must be shown for the use of chemical weapons.

Turkey sees their use as a crime against humanity.

There should be no impunity for the use of chemical weapons. This is the only way to prevent the recurrence of such attacks.

All perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks must be held accountable.

In this respect, the work of the OPCW remains fundamental.

Besides its task of identifying the use of chemicals as weapons, last year, we, the States Parties further assigned the OPCW to investigate and find out the perpetrators of the chemical weapons attacks in Syria.

Holding perpetrators accountable is the collective responsibility of the international community to the victims of those attacks. In this respect, we are looking forward to the reports of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT).

Mr Chair,

Countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations has been a priority for Turkey. International cooperation is a must to overcome this global challenge. Likewise, chemical terrorism is a serious threat that we must eliminate.

The most effective way to fight against such terrorist threats is the full and effective implementation of the Convention. OPCW has a key role through its capacity-building activities, enhancing national implementation of States Parties.

In this context, Turkey actively contributes to the efforts for strengthening national capacities. The first workshop of the Chemical Incident Preparedness for Hospitals Project was co-organized in Ankara, in November 2018, by the OPCW and the CBRN Department of the University of Health Sciences, with the support of the Turkish government.

We are very pleased to receive feedback that this workshop inspired other States Parties to scale up their efforts in strengthening national capacities.

Excellencies,
Dear Colleagues,

It is of utmost importance to keep the Chemical Weapons Convention highly relevant and up to date. In this context, we are ready to join consensus on the two technical change proposals, the Joint Proposal submitted by Canada, the Netherlands, the United States and the Russian proposal.

It is also vital that we all promote universalization of the Convention, which already stands closest to universality of all multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regimes, with its 193 States Parties.

Current progress and success of the OPCW clearly represent the strong international stance against chemical weapons.

Besides this great success, there are also challenges. There are yet four States that remain outside the Convention. We reiterate our appeal to those States to be part of this Convention immediately, as early as possible.

The ultimate objective of the Convention can be attained only when full universalization is achieved.

Mr Director-General,

The current state of affairs around the world requires this Organization to remain alert and take swift action in the case of any further violations of the Convention.

I can assure you that, for its part, Turkey will continue to lend its full support and cooperation to the effective implementation of the Convention.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, I wish you the best of success for a productive Conference further strengthening the Convention for a world free of chemical weapons.

I kindly request that this statement be issued as an official document of this session of the Conference and be placed on the public website.

Thank you.