



Opening Remarks by the OPCW Director-General, at the Seventh Annual Meeting of Representatives of Chemical Industry and National Authority of the Chemical Weapons Convention

As delivered on 17 November 2020, The Hague, Netherlands

Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I warmly welcome you to the 7th Annual Meeting of Representatives of the Chemical Industry and National Authorities. At the outset, I wish to express my gratitude to the Government of Qatar for the financial support it has provided for this event since its inception.

I would also like to thank all the participants for your availability and willingness to take part in this meeting, in its online format. I am pleased to see that 70 delegates from around the globe, including 20 industry representatives, have registered to participate today.

This event has always been a unique forum for deepening the engagement between the chemical industry and National Authorities in realising our goal of a world free of chemical weapons. National Authorities are a cornerstone in that effort and are crucial to the coordination of national implementation of the Convention. The Secretariat has worked closely with National Authorities in addressing the needs of the States Parties since the establishment of the OPCW.

Chemical industry is also a key stakeholder for the full and effective implementation of the Convention. I am pleased to see the participation of the International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA) in this event. I wish to acknowledge with high appreciation the technical inputs provided by the Council to this annual meeting.

I would also like to welcome the International Chemical Trade Association (ICTA) to this meeting. I am confident that ICTA's participation will further enrich the exchange of views and sharing of best practices at this annual event.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I cannot overstate the importance of the collaboration between the chemical industry and national authorities. The efforts to fulfil the very relevant obligations under Article VI of the Convention provide an excellent example of the need for such cooperation.

As of 31 October, a total of 84 States Parties had submitted declarations for declarable facilities or activities for 2019, which amounts to over 5,300 sites. The Secretariat conducts 241 Article VI inspections annually. Therefore, it is a considerable undertaking for many States Parties to meet their declaration obligations and other verification requirements each year. Fostering collaboration enables national authorities and the chemical industry to understand their roles and responsibilities, and to develop more efficient working practices.

Beyond the scope on Article VI, the aim of this meeting is to engage in a broader review of areas where collaboration is crucial. The chemical industry is a growing industrial sectors in the world, with a large number of facilities producing an ever-wider range of compounds. Progress of this kind has significantly improved our living standards and contributed to innovation that benefits economic development.

Nevertheless, these advances can also create novel security risks, including the acquisition of very dangerous toxic chemicals by non-State actors. This requires States Parties to elevate their levels of chemical safety and security, but just as importantly to work ever more closely with the chemical industry. This event is an important forum for sharing expertise, best practices and knowledge to develop capacities to meet these challenges.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am confident that the outcomes of this meeting will strengthen the relationship between National Authorities and the chemical industry in the implementation of the Convention. I look forward to your deliberations today on these topics and wish you a constructive discussion.
