

**Statement of Dr Maria Sultan, Chairperson/President
South Asian Strategic Stability Institute**

**25th Session of the Conference of States Parties
The Hague, The Netherlands**

Mister Chairman, Director General, Distinguished Delegates, CWC Coalition Colleagues and all other viewers,

We are here to celebrate the CWC's impact ridding the world of chemical weapons; however, some issues remain unresolved.

The purpose for the existence of the OPCW is to rid the world of chemical weapons, and the last leap in that cause is the universality of the CWC. This is now imperative. The achievement of the OPCW cannot be lauded enough. However, since chemical weapons and the threat of dual use chemicals is real, their usage has not been completely mitigated, and the threat of their potential use still lingers on today. The potential use by non-state actors to destabilize national and international security, as well as the threat from state actors if universality does not become a guiding principle, exists today.

Although there haven't been any major incidents of chemical warfare since Syria, the Fact Finding teams sent out by the OPCW in Syria did confirm multiple chemical weapons attacks. Eradicating these types of occurrences should be our focus. Combined with unsecure industrial production and transport of chemicals, advances in chemical and biological technology alongside human-technology interfaces, limited chemical attacks will remain a clear and present threat, if not completely eradicated. The CWC needs to reconcile these issues to accomplish our central objective to make a world free of chemical weapons.

The dual nature of chemical agents is the bone of contention between their complete mitigation and their continued use. Chemicals are used on industrial and commercial scales, and cannot be completely eradicated. Hence they must be regulated and the threat reduced. The recent Beirut explosion is an indicator of the dangers prevalent due to lack of supervision and regulation in the chemical industries around the world.

Countries not participating in the CWC hold large stockpiles of chemical weapons, estimated at thousands of tons. This number has remained consistent for the past decade. Volatile states as such are hence a threat to our collective mission and must be accounted for in our efforts to help achieve universality. Ladies and gentlemen, we need to act now and come together as energy and technology; unresolved issues, and threats of war remain alive.

I also take this opportunity to highlight the work being carried out by the South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI) University in increasing public awareness, and working and supporting the outstanding work being carried out in Pakistan's National Authority. Similarly, the outreach program at SASSI expands on the work of the Convention through sustained certificate and diploma programs for academia, industry, and the media regarding the CWC. We would here like to compliment work done by the CWC Coalition in bridging the gap between

industry, the public, government, and the OPCW. We all promote the work and understanding being developed at the OPCW for the effective implementation of the CWC and to help achieve a world free of chemical weapon.

Thank you for your attention, and I request this statement be included in the final Conference proceedings.