

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Margareta Kassangana
Permanent Representative of Poland to the OPCW
at the Fifth Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention
(The Hague, 15 – 19 May 2023)**

General debate

Mr. Chairperson, Director General, Distinguished Delegates,

Poland fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I would like to make a few points in my national capacity.

I congratulate Ambassador Henk Cor van der Kwast for his election as the Chairperson of the Fifth Review Conference. My delegation offers our constructive engagement and fully supports all efforts for a successful outcome of the Conference.

The Fifth Review Conference is a unique opportunity to review the implementation of the Convention and discuss future of the OPCW.

In view of numerous security threats and challenges, the role of international security architecture and the rule based international order is more important than ever. We should not spare efforts to strengthen further the chemical weapons non-proliferation regime.

We expect a very intensive week. Fortunately, we do not have to start from scratch thanks to the substantive preparatory work done in the framework of the Open Ended Working Group. I would like to commend Ambassador Lauri Kuusing for an excellent job in steering the work of the Group in an inclusive and transparent manner. In our view, the Chair's provisional text is an excellent basis for a concluding document.

Mr. Chairperson,

The use or threat of use of chemical weapons, anywhere, at any time, by anyone and under any circumstances is totally unacceptable. We need to make sure that this norm is fully and universally observed.

All violations of the Convention should be treated in an equally serious manner and fully investigated.

In order to discourage future violations of the Convention, it is necessary to make sure that there is no impunity for the use of chemical weapons and that all perpetrators of such crimes are held accountable. Poland fully supports the work of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team and joins other States Parties in calling on the Syrian Arab Republic to comply with the Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

With the elimination of the last declared stockpiles of chemical weapons, which is expected to happen later this year, an important goal will be completed. However, this will not mean that the OPCW will suddenly become redundant. On the contrary, preventing the return of chemical weapons and their use will require our constant attention.

Poland has been continuously promoting efforts to get rid of the chemical weapons and the OPCW through our broadly supported annual UNGA resolution on the implementation of the CWC. We strongly support universalization of the CWC and strengthening its observance.

There is added value in enhancing verification in the framework of the CWC as it is the core element of ensuring its effectiveness. This part of OPCW activities will

remain of key importance, therefore, it is crucial to preserve the Organization's capabilities and expertise in this area.

Poland also supports initiatives aimed at reinforcing chemical safety and security and closely following technological developments and their possible effect on the implementation of the CWC.

The States Parties must ensure that the OPCW can operate effectively, stays fit for purpose, and has predictable and solid financial resources. We believe that the newly opened ChemTech Centre will greatly contribute to the capabilities of the Organization.

Mr. Chairperson,

Poland believes that freeing the world of chemical weapons is not only about the destruction of all existing stockpiles and making sure that they are never used again in the future. It is also about minimizing potential risks stemming from the chemical weapons dumped at sea. We welcome the growing awareness among the States Parties about the challenges related to sea dumped chemical weapons and call for a stronger involvement of the OPCW in supporting voluntary cooperation on the matter. Poland and 14 other countries have submitted a working paper for the Review Conference on this subject. I hope that this document will trigger a meaningful discussion on possible steps to be taken to foster international cooperation and promote the OPCW as a forum for voluntary cooperation on the issue.

I would kindly ask to consider this statement as an official series document and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you.