



NEW ZEALAND STATEMENT
BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SUSANNAH GORDON PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW ZEALAND TO
THE OPCW AT THE 104TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Mr Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,

Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa [Greetings, greetings, greetings to you all].

Chair, you can count on Aotearoa New Zealand's cooperation and support for the week ahead.

We also convey our appreciation to, and confidence in, Director-General Fernando Arias and the OPCW Technical Secretariat. Again, we also acknowledge the important contributions of industry, academia and civil society in supporting and advancing our work here in the OPCW.

We continue to see the fruits of member states' efforts in the lead up to, and during, the Fifth Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention. For Aotearoa New Zealand, we want to see meaningful progress continue across the mandate of the Organisation and are encouraged to see that the momentum of the Review Conference continues to drive us in that direction. As we stated in the last Executive Council meeting, we stand by our commitment to work constructively with all delegations on those matters we discussed during the Review Conference.

As co-facilitator alongside H.E. Ambassador Elizabeth Ward Neiman of Panama on OPCW staff tenure policy, we look forward to finding a proposal that works for the Director General and for member states. Aotearoa New Zealand is committed to a transparent and open process that we hope all can engage in.

Diversity and inclusion in the OPCW remains critical. We want to see an OPCW that reflects the range of countries that make up its membership. Lifting geographical diversity within the Organisation requires a partnership approach between the Technical Secretariat and us, the member states. Aotearoa New Zealand will continue to do our part.

Ensuring gender balance within the Technical Secretariat and a gender-responsive lens is applied to our work is also important to Aotearoa New Zealand. So is lifting engagement with non-government organisations. This will only support, not detract, from our work and ensure that the decisions we make as member states are robust and credible.

We look forward to engaging in discussions on these issues in the coming months.

Universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention is not beyond the Organisation's reach and we continue to support efforts to engage those four countries that remain outside of the Convention.

We also want to ensure that all those countries already in the fold have the ability to implement national legislation that gives effect to their obligations under the Convention. Aotearoa New Zealand continues to consider what we can do to partner with States Parties in this regard.

We continue to put on the record our call on the Syrian Arab Republic to come into compliance with the Convention, to declare and destroy the entirety of its chemical weapons programme, and to cooperate fully and in good faith with the Secretariat and other States Parties.

Aotearoa New Zealand also condemns, unequivocally, the unprovoked and unjustified attack by Russia on Ukraine. We remain concerned about allegations of the use of riot control agents as a weapon by Russia in Ukraine. Aotearoa New Zealand adds its voice to the call by many states for Russia to cease all military operations in Ukraine and to immediately and permanently withdraw.

We as States Parties have an opportunity to firmly demonstrate our commitment - and responsibility - to support the work of the OPCW by ensuring it has adequate resources to fulfil its mandate. Aotearoa New Zealand advocates for a biennial Programme and Budget that is reasonable and justifiable. We want to ensure that it not only provides the OPCW the financial support required to carry out its mandate and full programme of work, but that it also offers the Technical Secretariat clear pointers on priorities for the years ahead. Our thanks to Ireland and Poland for co-facilitating the budget discussions again this year.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

We ask that this statement be made an official-series document and published on the OPCW external server and public website.