



The 28th session of the Conference of States Parties of the OPCW

General Debate

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen

Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Norway

Mr. Chair,

Mr. Director-General,

Distinguished Colleagues,

Norway warmly congratulates you, Mr. Chair, on your election. Rest assured that you have our full support and cooperation as you carry out your important and demanding duties. We wish you and your vice chairs every success!

Mr. Chair.

Norway remains firmly committed to upholding the Chemical Weapons Convention, and we are a fervent and steadfast supporter of the OPCW. The Chemical Weapons Convention is an important instrument in the global security architecture, and it plays a vital role in keeping the world safe from one of the most horrendous types of weapons known to humanity.

Earlier this year, we marked the completion of the destruction of all declared stockpiles of chemical weapons in the world. This was a milestone in global disarmament efforts, yet much important work remains to be done. It is well known and documented that undeclared chemical weapons still exist, that such weapons have been used in recent years, and that they continue to pose a grave threat to global security. Our joint efforts to rid the world of chemical weapons must continue unabated until these weapons no longer exist.

Norway has repeatedly condemned the blatant use of chemical weapons seen in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia, Russia and the United Kingdom in recent years. We deeply regret that the Syrian Arab Republic has consistently failed to comply with its obligations under the

Chemical Weapons Convention and to cooperate with the OPCW to resolve its outstanding issues. Only Syrian authorities are in the position to complete the measures which are necessary to lift the suspension of Syria's rights and privileges as a State Party to the Convention. Likewise, Russia has yet to account for its use of chemical weapons, both in the United Kingdom in 2018 and on its own territory in August 2020, against Mr. Aleksey Navalny. We reiterate our call on Russia to provide immediate, full and complete disclosure of its Novichok programme to the OPCW. Norway further remains concerned at reports that Russia has used riot control agents against Ukrainian armed forces in its brutal war of aggression against Ukraine, as such use is contrary with Article 1 of the Convention.

Mr. Chair.

We are living in tumultuous times.

It is more important than ever that we uphold and protect the rules-based international multilateral order of which the OPCW is part. Through its illegal and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine, Russia continues to show contempt for this order. In the OPCW, Russia has repeatedly spread unsubstantiated allegations regarding Ukraine's purported plans to use chemical weapons. Russia has also engaged in widespread disinformation campaigns aimed at sowing confusion or discrediting the OPCW. Norway condemns these attempts at undermining multilateralism which are merely a smoke screen tactic on Russia's part. We express our full and unwavering solidarity and support to the people and government of Ukraine.

Mr. Chair,

It is our shared responsibility that the OPCW is fit for purpose, both for present and future challenges. It is essential that we adapt to emerging technologies and threats. The Organization's investigative capabilities, including non-routine inspections must be maintained and schedules must be updated to reflect new toxic chemicals. Norway urges all States Parties to support the adoption of a budget which will enable the Technical Secretariat to carry out its tasks effectively.

Mr. Chair,

We must ensure that women are part of decision-making bodies at all levels, and that the rights and needs of women are recognized, in line with Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. This is not only the right thing to do, but also the smart thing to do.

We must also facilitate interaction between civil society, private sector and the OPCW. External stakeholders, such as chemical industry associations, NGOs, think tanks, academia and others can provide invaluable input to the advancement of the Chemical

Weapons' Convention. Norway continues to hold the view that the guidelines for their participation should be revised with stronger emphasis on transparency and predictability.

Mr. Chair,

Norway has full confidence in the professionalism, expertise, impartiality, and dedication of the Technical Secretariat. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Director-General Fernando Arias and his entire team for their tireless efforts in working towards a world free of chemical weapons.

Thank you.