

Convention for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

30th Conference of States Parties

Statement by Amb. Engelbert Theuermann

Permanent Representative of Austria to the OPCW

General Debate

The Hague, 24 November - 28 November 2025

Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen

Austria warmly welcomes you, Ambassador Augustin Vasquez Gomez, as the chair of this conference. We are confident you will steer our deliberations in an able manner.

We would also like to thank the outgoing chair, Ambassador Almir Sahovic, as well as all committee members, the chair of the Executive Council as well as the Director General of OPCW and the Technical Secretariat for their excellent and hard work.

Chair, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Austria is fully aligned with the Statement delivered by the European Union and we would like to add a few remarks in our national capacity.

The Chemical Weapons Convention embodies a strong set of norms. However, the repeated use of chemical weapons constitutes a grave concern. We are particularly alarmed by the registered large-scale use of riot control agents as a means of warfare and the reported use of Chloropikrin by Russia in its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, which are in clear violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We see it as imperative that States are held accountable for non-compliance with their Treaty obligations.

Austria commends the professionalism of the OPCW Technical Secretariat and fully supports its work in fulfilling its mandate, including the demanding Syria dossier. We welcome the cooperation of the Syrian transition authorities with the OPCW. Now is the time to rebuild trust, transparency and accountability and ensure urgent progress towards the verified and irreversible elimination of any remnants of the Assad-era chemical weapon programme. We appreciate the capacity building efforts undertaken by the OPCW during this year and particularly commend the Africa programme.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

We would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to Director General Ferdinand Arias, who has filled his post with professionalism, impartiality and emotional intelligence. He has been navigating the Organisation skillfully in challenging times, including the situation in

Syria, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine or the impact of emerging technologies on the implementation of our Convention. We commend him for the great job he has done and wish him well for the future.

We warmly welcome the incoming Director General, Amb. Sabrina Dallafior-Matter, and assure her of the fullest support from our delegation. We wish her an excellent start in June and all the best for this important assignment. We would also like to congratulate Amb. Schieb for his tireless efforts in managing a process of finding a new Director General that was transparent, fair and had an undisputed outcome.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

In concluding I would like to draw your attention to emerging technologies and their impact on the work under the Convention. These technologies such as artificial intelligence, 3D printing or quantum computing provide opportunities but also challenges including for verification that need to be addressed comprehensively. We value the work of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) and its working groups in this regard.

Thank you for your attention.