

Statement by H.E. Olivier Belle, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Belgium to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) at the 30th Session of the Conference of the States Parties under agenda item 8 (General Debate)

Belgium would like to take this opportunity once again during the General Debate to thank the Technical Secretariat and the Director-General for their professionalism and compliance with the rules governing their actions. It is on this solid foundation that the Organisation acts in the interests of all its members.

Today's world is experiencing significant turbulence and massive violations of international law. Faced with these challenges, it is of essential importance to redouble our support for the rules-based international order, of which the OPCW constitutes one crucial pillar. We need to champion the rule of law and oppose those who want to re-introduce a world based on intimidation and the law of force.

While the international norm against chemical weapons stands strong, recent use on the battlefield and in targeted assassinations has shown that our common undertaking is under strain. Yet, our accomplishments must not slip away. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons remains a unique instrument in this regard. It embodies a near-universal rejection of chemical weapons and it contains the tools to prevent their reemergence and to verify any alleged use.

Confronted with the troubled environment we just described, the OPCW admirably stays on track. The Executive Council managed to recommend by consensus the name of the next Director-General to be appointed by this Conference. The Organisation works relentlessly, with the broad commitment of States parties, to help the Syrian people and its transitional authorities to fulfil their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. Furthermore, the Organisation is collectively determined to keep abreast of the challenges and opportunities stemming from the emerging technologies and the rise of artificial intelligence.

In view of the many challenges ahead – in particular, the elimination of chemical weapons in Syria – Belgium would have preferred a more ambitious budget for the Organisation but will join the consensus on the consolidated version proposed for adoption.

In short, the Organisation can count on our unwavering support. This was demonstrated once again recently by the presence of our Minister of Defence at a lunch organised on 13 November to mark the Director-General's visit to Brussels.

As a country that suffered from the use of chemical weapons in Flanders Fields during the First World War – as some of you may still remember from our visit to Ypres in 2024 – Belgium is pleased to see how the OPCW uniquely contributes to the eradication of this weapon of mass destruction, the consolidation of the rule of law and the strengthening of multilateralism.

All that remains is for me to thank Director-General Arias for his excellent work at the helm of our organisation and to wish him every success for the future.

I thank you.

M. Olivier Belle
Ambassador

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