



**National Statement delivered by Katharina Ahrendts,**  
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**of the German Federal Government**

At the 30<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the States Parties

Mr Chairman, Director-General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Firstly, I wish to congratulate our Chairman, Ambassador Agustín Vázquez Gómez of El Salvador, on his election as Chairperson of the 30<sup>th</sup> Conference of States Parties. My delegation assures you of our full support.

Chair,

The CWC is one of the most successful disarmament treaties. With the destruction of all declared chemical weapons stockpiles in 2023, the Organisation achieved a major milestone in its endeavour to rid the world of chemical warfare.

Unfortunately, this does not mean that the threat of chemical weapons use and proliferation risks are eliminated. Member States and the OPCW still have a long way to go.

The international order and arms control architecture are confronted with a multitude of crises. Let me start with a crisis that too often does not receive the necessary attention: Sudan is facing the direst humanitarian catastrophe, shaken by a brutal armed conflict. Reports of alleged chemical weapons' use in Sudan are worrying, and the issue needs to be fully clarified.

Chair,

We are meeting here today under fundamentally different circumstances than we did last year. In Syria, the fall of the Assad regime put an end to one of the cruellest chapters of chemical weapons use, namely one against Syrian civilians, and the fall of the regime has changed the fate of the Syrian people.

There is a unique opportunity for the OPCW to ensure the verification and destruction of all remaining chemical weapons in Syria. It's an opportunity, and it's a responsibility for us as member states to eliminate a dangerous proliferation risk.

Early on, the new Syrian government has expressed its commitment and dedication to verifiably destroy all remaining chemical weapons and return to full compliance with the CWC. We appreciate that the Syrian Foreign Minister attended the March Executive Council to stress this commitment.

Furthermore, we commend the Syrian authorities for supporting the establishment of the permanent presence of the OPCW and for facilitating first visits and inspections.

Yet, the situation in Syria remains complex. Due to the volatile security situation, the opaque nature of the Assad chemical weapons programme, and also challenges regarding capacity and expertise, the task ahead is difficult for both the new Syrian Government and the OPCW, and will require a lot of international support.

At the same time, it is crucial that this task be tackled efficiently and swiftly. Proliferation risks remain high. The existence of chemical weapons and precursors is a destabilizing factor for both regional as well as international security. It is in the interest of all of us that all remaining chemical weapons in Syria are verifiably destroyed as soon as possible. Time is of the essence here. Member States and the OPCW need to work together to seize the momentum and prioritize this effort.

I wish to also underline that it is fundamental to identify perpetrators of chemical weapons use in Syria and to hold them to account. Evidence-gathering should therefore be a priority for the OPCW mission and the Syrian authorities.

Chair,

Turning to the OPCW budget for 2026/2027: We fully understand the need for a "Zero Nominal Growth" approach. However, this comes at a difficult moment. The Syria mission will require significant resources. States Parties will thus need to step up and contribute significant amounts by voluntary contributions. In light of the acute proliferation risks, it is important that the entire membership work together to ensure the success of the Syria mission.

Germany stands ready to support: financially, with expertise and in-kind. And we call on all States Parties to contribute as well. Eliminating Assad's chemical weapons while working towards accountability, should be a common goal of all States Parties, as it directly enhances regional and international peace and security.

Chair,

We are deeply worried that chemical weapons continue to be used:

Russia continues its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, brutally targeting civilians and energy infrastructure critical for providing heating for the cold winter months. Through its use of chemical weapons in its war against Ukraine Russia is displaying a callous disregard both for international law and the chemical weapons taboo, which is at the core of the Chemical Weapons Convention. It must be our common goal as States Parties to ensure the viability of this Convention as well as of international humanitarian law and the arms control architecture in general.

The Russian Federation continues to use riot control agents as well as the choking agent chloropicrin in its war of aggression against Ukraine, thereby demonstrating a blatant disregard for international law, and for the Convention.

The OPCW has conducted three Technical Assistance Visits and has confirmed that riot control agents have been used at the Ukrainian frontline. Ukraine has reported over 11.000 incidents of hazardous chemical agents used by the Russian Federation. This July, the German and Dutch intelligence services published their findings on the continuing, intensifying and systematic use of riot control agents and chloropicrin by Russia in Ukraine as a method of warfare.

These reports and findings must be a warning to all of us. Member States and the Technical Secretariat should focus their attention on these grave violations of international law, and of the CWC.

These violations must stop, and perpetrators must be held accountable. If such grave violations go unpunished, we risk the global norm on prohibition of the use of chemical weapon to be eroded.

We are grateful for the assistance delivered to Ukraine by the Technical Secretariat and for the three Technical Assistance Visits already undertaken. We ask the Technical Secretariat to work closely together with Ukraine so as to identify ways to attribute the use of chemical weapons to the perpetrators in an independent and verifiable manner. Accountability is of utmost importance in order to uphold the prohibition enshrined in the Convention.

Chair,

Russia's grave non-compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention must have institutional consequences as well. A State Party which overtly tramples underfoot the most fundamental ban of the Convention should not enjoy a seat in the Executive Council, the steering body of the OPCW. States Parties have recognized this in the last two years by voting instead for states who fully respect the Convention.

This year, Russia is again applying for a seat in the Executive Council. In view of the grave and systematic violations of the Convention by the Russian Federation in Ukraine, we call on all States Parties to uphold the Convention: Let us keep a brutal perpetrator of chemical weapons attacks out of the Executive Council. States Parties should also respect the wish of the large majority of members of the Eastern European Group who do not want to be represented by a non-compliant member of their group. Let me add our expectation of a smooth election process. Besides, I would like to point out that Russia is not silenced by not enjoying an EC seat. As an observer, Russia retains ample opportunity to speak and communicate its views at meetings of the Council.

Chair,

The Organisation is not only confronted with difficult geopolitical circumstances but also with ever accelerating developments in science and technology. Emerging technologies will undeniably have a significant impact on the work of the OPCW and in the implementation of the CWC. This entails both valuable opportunities, which should be taken advantage of, as well as considerable risks.

We commend Director-General Arias for recognizing the pressing nature of these developments, in particular stemming from artificial intelligence, and for introducing the Temporary Working Group on AI. We are awaiting its final report. The most pressing task is now to translate the results of the working group into practice by taking into account the valuable input from scientists and industry experts and equipping the OPCW to stay effective in these challenging times. Germany will remain actively involved in this process.

Chair,

As we will appoint a new Director-General later on this week, I want to take this opportunity to thank Director-General Arias. Germany highly appreciates his competent and strong leadership of the OPCW over the last 7 years. The OPCW has benefited greatly from his tireless

efforts to uphold the global norm against chemical weapons use and rid the world of all chemical weapons.

Yet, the Director-General's term is long from finished and we look forward to continuing our close cooperation with him in the coming months.

At the same time, I would like to express Germany's full support to the incoming Director-General, Ambassador Dallafior Matter, who stands to be appointed by this Conference. Germany will continue its close cooperation with the OPCW, and we will do our best to support the transition.

Chair,

The OPCW is faced with manifold challenges to the international order and the rules established by the CWC. The global norm against the use of chemical weapons is a key pillar of international peace and security. To see the norm under pressure by blatant non-compliance is not a state of affairs we can accept. All States Parties are called upon to actively defend the Chemical Weapons Convention against any violations. I wish to assure the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat of our utmost support for a strong and successful OPCW.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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