



**OPCW**

**Conference of the States Parties**

Thirteenth Session  
2 – 5 December 2008

C-13/DG.9  
2 December 2008  
Original: ENGLISH

**OPENING STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL  
TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES  
AT ITS THIRTEENTH SESSION**

Mr Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,

1. I welcome you all to the Thirteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.
2. It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you, Ambassador Minoru Shibuya of Japan, on assuming the Chairmanship of the Conference. You bring to this position your long diplomatic experience and deep understanding of the dynamics that shape our work. I assure you of my own and the Technical Secretariat's commitment to fully support you in your important functions.
3. Your election also represents a clear recognition of Japan's important contribution to the work and success of the OPCW. Not only is Japan the second largest contributor to our budget, but it has been a staunch supporter of the disarmament and non-proliferation goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Furthermore, Japan has effectively supported specific and important undertakings in the areas of universality, assistance and protection, and international cooperation through additional voluntary contributions.
4. May I also pay tribute to our outgoing Chairman, my good friend Ambassador Idris of Sudan, who steered the proceedings of this Conference so successfully during the past year.
5. I am also pleased to welcome H.E. Mr Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Director-General of the United Nations Office in Geneva, and Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament. We value your presence here today, distinguished colleague, as yet another testimony to the strong bonds between the OPCW and the United Nations. I wish to convey, on behalf of the OPCW, our appreciation to H.E. Mr Ban Ki-moon for his many gestures of support to the Convention and to our Organisation.
6. Distinguished colleagues, I am sure we are all shocked at last week's terrorist attacks in the Indian city of Mumbai. I express my sincere condolences to the government and people of India over the tragic loss of innocent life. This atrocity highlights the grave dangers posed by terrorism to peace and security.



Mr Chairman,

7. The Conference meets at the closing of another important year for the Convention and for the OPCW. Significant progress has been made in bringing forward the implementation of the Convention.
8. Last April, the Second Review Conference concluded its work successfully. This Conference represented a key milestone in the history of the Organisation.
9. At the Second Review Conference, Member States renewed their firm commitment to the object and purpose of the Convention as an essential legal tool contributing substantially to the cause of international peace and to the security of us all. States Parties affirmed that the Convention sets new standards for both disarmament and non-proliferation, given its non-discriminatory and multilateral verification regime. Member States assessed the achievements in the various areas of the operation of the Convention, and indicated what steps are needed to ensure the continued relevance of this fundamental treaty in the years to come.
10. Bringing the Second Review Conference to a successful conclusion certainly required a high degree of dedication by Member States, as discussions had been long and difficult. Indeed, the intensity of the debate was evidence of the importance that delegations attached to the issues at stake. The consensus that emerged there bears witness to the wisdom and constructive spirit of all our Member States, and this is very good news, not just for disarmament and non-proliferation, but indeed, for multilateralism itself.
11. On 20 November 2008, Lebanon deposited its instrument of accession to the Convention and, therefore, this country will become our 185th State Party. I am convinced that I speak on behalf of all of us in expressing to Lebanon and its Government, represented here today by H.E. Ambassador Zeidan Al Saghir, our wholehearted congratulations on this landmark achievement. Lebanon's accession represents not just a major success for this country and for the OPCW, but a major development bound, I am sure, to have a significant beneficial effect for our universality endeavours in the Middle East.

Mr Chairman,

12. Allow me now to address the work of the Secretariat over the past year.

#### **Chemical demilitarisation and verification**

13. I wish to report to you that the verification of the timely, complete and irreversible destruction of all chemical weapons declared by our Member States remains central to our present work. Around 85% of the overall inspection days are consistently dedicated to this core objective and, with the expected intensification of destruction activities, is likely to increase in the future. Such a high percentage is to continue next year and, if anything, is bound to increase.
14. In 2008, significant progress continued to be made in the area of chemical disarmament. Once again, possessor States demonstrated their dedication to the

achievement of the goal of complete destruction of their stockpiles by the final deadlines set forth in the Convention.

15. On 10 July 2008, A State Party became the second possessor State, after Albania, to eliminate its entire chemical weapons stockpile. This notable achievement deserves to be commended and represents yet another important milestone in the process towards complete chemical disarmament.
16. As at 31 October 2008, the aggregate amount of Category 1 chemical weapons destroyed by A State Party, Albania, India, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America was 29,069.89 metric tonnes, or approximately 41.80%, of the aggregate declared quantity. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has not yet begun the destruction of its Category 1 chemical weapons. In addition, 915 metric tonnes (or 51.80%) of the Category 2 chemical weapons declared by Albania, India, Libya, and the Russian Federation have also been destroyed. And of course, all States Parties which declared Category 3 chemical weapons have completed the destruction of these weapons.
17. In the past year, A State Party, India, Libya, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America, all of which have been granted extensions for completing the destruction of their Category 1 chemical weapons, continued to fulfil their reporting obligations and presented, in a timely manner, their fourth and fifth reports. The Secretariat was able to reconcile the data that it had collected during on-site inspections with the information provided in all these reports, and found it to be consistent.
18. A significant achievement was marked recently by the conclusion of destruction operations at Newport, Indiana, in the United States of America. The Newport contribution added to the overall destruction effort in the United States, which thereby increased as at the end of October to 15,491 metric tonnes, or approximately 55.80% of the declared stockpiles destroyed to date. Four chemical weapons destruction facility (CWDF) sites—at Anniston, Pine Bluff, Tooele, and Umatilla—are currently conducting destruction operations in that country. Three other facilities in the United States—Johnston Atoll, Aberdeen, and Pine Bluff Binary Destruction Facility—have also completed chemical weapons destruction operations. The construction of the new CWDFs located at Blue Grass and Pueblo is in progress.
19. I should add that I have conveyed to President-elect Barack Obama my warm congratulations for his historic election and my total confidence that the new administration in the United States will remain fully committed to the Convention.
20. Destruction and, in particular, the commissioning and start of operations at facilities in the Russian Federation have been proceeding apace. This possessor State has made substantial progress in recent times, having destroyed to date about 11,942 metric tonnes, or 29.80%, of its Category 1 chemical weapons. The facility at Leonidovka effectively commenced destruction operations on 2 September 2008. Two other facilities are also operating currently in the Russian Federation, at Kambarka and Maradykovsky. Work is ongoing at the facilities located at Pochep, Kizner, and Shchuchye, the latter scheduled to be ready for operations towards the end of this year.

21. Following a decision by the Conference of the States Parties at its Eleventh Session, between 8 and 11 September 2008, the Russian Federation hosted a visit by a delegation of the Executive Council, led by its Chairman, Ambassador Oksana Tomová from the Slovak Republic, to the CWDF located at Shchuchye, in the Kurgansk region. The Executive Council delegation was given comprehensive briefings and presentations prior to and during the visit, and ample opportunity to address all the issues of its interest. As stated in the report of the Executive Council Chairman, the Russian Federation reaffirmed during the visit its commitment to fulfil its obligations under the Convention within the established timelines, and is taking concrete steps to that end. We therefore look forward to the Russian Federation completing destruction of 45% of its stockpile by 31 December 2009, as decided by the Conference at its Eleventh Session (C-11/DEC.14, dated 8 December 2006).
22. In addition, I am delighted to have met yesterday the Russian Federation's Presidential Representative to the Volga Federal District, Mr Grigoriy Rapota, who clearly reaffirmed his Government's determination to complete the destruction of all this country's chemical weapons stockpiles within the Convention's deadlines.
23. India, which has consistently shown commendable dedication to the timely fulfilment of its obligations under the Convention, has destroyed to date 97.03% of its declared Category 1 chemical weapons. The destruction facility in India is currently conducting the destruction of the residual heel in bulk storage vessels.
24. In September 2008, the Secretariat conducted its initial visit to the Ruwagha Chemicals Reloading System and the Rabta Toxic Chemical Destruction Facility in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. Operations for the reloading of the chemical warfare agent and remaining precursors from containers into designated transportation tanks, subject to delivery by road to the Rabta facility, are planned to commence in January 2009.

#### **Chemical weapons production facilities**

25. Concerning chemical weapons production facilities (CWPF), of the 65 declared by 12 States Parties, 42 have already been destroyed and 19 have been converted for purposes not prohibited under the Convention. One CWPF in India is still to be destroyed after the completion of its authorised temporary conversion for chemical weapons destruction purposes. One other CWPF in the Russian Federation and two in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya still have to complete their conversion for non-prohibited purposes.
26. One issue which remains to be solved for converted CWPFs, and which is still under consideration by the Executive Council, relates to the "nature of continued verification measures" upon completion of the 10-year period after the Director-General has certified its conversion. I hope the Council will soon be able to address this important question.

### **Abandoned Chemical Weapons**

27. During this year, China and Japan submitted two national reports each on the progress made towards the destruction of all the chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China. I am pleased to report that the two countries reached a tentative agreement on the risk assessment relating to the destruction operations at Nanjing, and continue preliminary preparations with respect to the Haerbaling abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) destruction project. I understand that a trial excavation will commence at Haerbaling later this year to provide more information on the condition of buried ACWs.
28. Trilateral consultations between China, Japan, and the Secretariat on this issue have been held regularly. In the most recent of such consultations, held in October in Beijing, these States Parties provided their comments on the Draft Detailed Plan for Verification and the Facility Agreement, which the Secretariat had earlier submitted and whose finalisation is necessary for the beginning of destruction operations.
29. I reaffirm here the best disposition of the Secretariat to fully support China and Japan in their efforts, as per the Convention. Moreover, I also applaud the continuing cooperation between them in dealing with this historical legacy in a constructive manner so that we can all look forward to the commencement of the process of concrete destruction of these dangerous weapons as early as possible.
30. Old chemical weapons continue to be recovered. In 2008, the Secretariat verified declarations and notifications received in this regard from seven States Parties.

### **Non-proliferation and industry inspections**

Mr Chairman,

31. In what concerns the OPCW's core objective of ensuring the non-proliferation of chemical weapons, let me refer to Article VI industry inspections.
32. Since the beginning of this year, 192 inspections have been completed, which included nine Schedule 2 inspections with Sampling and Analysis. This number represents 96% of the total number of Article VI inspections budgeted for the year 2008 and I fully expect that we will complete the programme over the next three weeks as scheduled.
33. At the end of 2008, on average, the facilities in the four inspectable categories will have been inspected as follows: Schedule 1, over 6 times each facility; Schedule 2, about 2.5 times each; Schedule 3 facilities, about 55% of the inspectable sites have been inspected, and for other chemical production facility (OCPF) plant sites about 13.6% of the inspectable sites have been inspected. These figures are based on the current number of inspectable sites as per the Supplement to the 2007 VIR.
34. Regarding OCPF site selection, as previously indicated, the Secretariat will provide a full report to the first Executive Council session in 2009 on the results of the new selection methodology, which was implemented at my initiative this year. At this stage I can say that, based on our preliminary evaluation, the results are in line with

what we had anticipated. That is to say, countries with a large number of declared facilities have received more inspections this year than in previous years, while those with a smaller number of sites have received fewer inspections.

35. Thus, while 12 OCPFs were inspected in States Parties belonging to the African Group between 1 January and 30 November 2007, just one facility in this group has been inspected during the same time span this year. Similarly, 12 facilities were inspected in the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) countries last year, compared to only 8 this year. In States Parties from Eastern Europe, 19 facilities were inspected last year, and 11 have been inspected this year. In Asia, the number of inspections has increased from 35 last year to 40 up to 28 November this year, but their distribution has changed from 17 States Parties to only 9 this year as 3 of the States Parties in this group account for more than half of the total number of the OCPFs declared by Member States. Finally, in Western European and Other States Group (WEOG) countries, which have almost one-third of the OCPFs declared worldwide, the number of inspections has increased from 37 last year to 52 this year.
36. I again encourage States Parties to find an agreement on a definitive site selection methodology as provided for in the Verification Annex. This should be treated as a matter of priority, as there has already been a long delay in finding common ground.

### **Declarations**

Mr Chairman,

37. At its Fifty-Third Session, the Executive Council reached a decision on guidelines regarding the declaration of imports and exports of scheduled chemicals (EC-53/DEC.16\*, dated 27 June 2008), which provides essential guidance to States Parties and will improve the quality of declarations of aggregate national data (AND).
38. Similarly, the enhancement of information in OCPF declarations is of importance for the attainment of a satisfactory balance in the inspection of OCPF sites. In this connection, I wish to refer to the two papers on this subject, prepared and submitted by the Secretariat to the Council during its Fifty-Third Session (EC-53/DG.11 and EC-53/S/5, both dated 17 June 2008).
39. These two papers provide a number of ways to better use the limited resources of the Secretariat by improving the selection of more relevant facilities for inspection and thus avoiding unnecessary inspections. Moreover, by relating the provisions of Note EC-53/DG.11 to the additional guidance provided to States Parties in the recently issued 2008 version of the Declarations Handbook, we can address the incidence of incorrect declarations in inspections being conducted at sites that eventually turn out to be non-inspectable OCPFs.
40. As you will recall, product-group codes have been used for many years in OCPF declarations to indicate the main activities of the declared plant sites. In Note EC-53/DG.11, the Secretariat introduced the concept of using subcategories in these product group codes to identify six common bulk chemicals which are considered of low relevance to the Convention. By using these subcategories, we can reduce the probability of selecting for inspection plant sites that produce only these chemicals,

thereby contributing to our aim of inspecting the sites that are more relevant to the Convention.

41. I wish, therefore, to encourage States Parties once again to use these new subcategories in their OCPF declarations to be submitted for 2009, so that the information can be utilised for the 2010 site-selection process. We are ready to work with the States Parties that might have difficulty in implementing this during next year.
42. In short, the adoption of our suggestions would help streamline the total number of inspectable OCPFs and the number of inspections considered necessary for this category each year. Therefore, I see as a very positive step the commencement of consultations on the proposals contained in Note EC-53/S/5 and I look forward to their successful and early conclusion.
43. I also wish to note the consultations that have resumed in the Industry Cluster on another important topic, namely the low concentration of Schedule 2A/2A\* chemicals. This is a long-standing topic and I am encouraged by the fact that we have a new facilitator to move the discussions forward.

### **Schedule 3 subsequent inspections**

Mr Chairman,

44. Since 2004, as part of the measures to strengthen the deterrent element of the verification regimes, a small number of repeat inspections have been conducted to previously-inspected OCPF and Schedule 3 plant sites. Based on the fact that the majority of the States Parties have now received inspections to all their declared Schedule 3 plant sites, I have instructed staff to increase the rate of these repeat Schedule 3 inspections from 5% to 10% of the overall number of inspections as from 2009.
45. This step is needed to maintain the deterrent element of the verification regime and to ensure an adequate geographical distribution of Schedule 3 inspections, whilst avoiding their gradually being limited to fewer and fewer States Parties. The Secretariat will review this rate annually and make adjustments accordingly, taking into account the distribution of the remaining plant sites eligible for initial inspections.

### **Verification Information System and EDNA**

Mr Chairman,

46. I have previously reported on the successful development and implementation of the Verification Information System (VIS). The VIS is now the key tool for data entry, validation, and evaluation of the declarations made under Article VI, as well as for tracking verification-related documentation. With a view to facilitating the review and analysis of declarations by other Member States, the Secretariat has also, for the first time, delivered appropriately redacted Article VI declarations data in electronic form to the Member States that have so requested.

47. An important feature of the VIS is that it offers States Parties the option of submitting their Article VI declarations in electronic form, and I am pleased to note that several States Parties are already doing so. The Secretariat will continue to actively support and encourage National Authorities to avail themselves of this option.
48. Another important step in the Secretariat's support to interested National Authorities, is the release of the first version of the electronic declaration software for National Authorities (EDNA). This first version covers the declaration of aggregate national data on OCPF plant sites. The Secretariat is also offering training on the EDNA software to personnel from National Authorities. More than 70 representatives from around 50 National Authorities have already signed up for training that took place in connection with the National Authority Days and that will continue during the week of the Conference. The next version of EDNA will also cover the declaration of Schedule 1, 2, and 3 facilities and is planned for release in 2009.

### **Inspectorate**

Mr Chairman,

49. At present, the Secretariat is preparing to welcome two new groups of inspectors, which will be operational in 2009 (Group I and Group J), adding up to 29 new inspectors with diverse specialities.
50. Training of new inspectors has become a key objective as the Organisation evolves towards maximum levels of inspection activities. We must ensure that the quality and technical expertise of inspectors continues to be maintained and that new inspectors receive the basic technical knowledge necessary for them to join inspection teams as soon as possible.
51. Again, 2008 will be remembered for the notable support of States Parties for a broad variety of our training activities. This has resulted in approximately 3,000 inspector days of training events. Our gratitude particularly goes to all States Parties that have contributed to these endeavours.
52. An important challenge that remains is managing the availability of inspector resources while new inspectors are on training. The acceptance by some Possessor States of the Special Service Agreement (SSA) scheme for inspectors at destruction facilities has not only served to maintain and transfer knowledge, but also to provide substantial savings. The scheme has proven to be an excellent option for dealing with uncertainty and changing national destruction plans as we move towards a new cycle.

### **Challenge inspections and alleged use**

Mr Chairman,

53. The Secretariat has continued to ensure its readiness for the eventuality of a challenge inspection, should a request in this regard be addressed to it by a member State, in accordance with the Convention. In addition, the Secretariat will continue to develop and maintain a high degree of readiness to provide assistance in the case of any use or

threat of use of chemical weapons, with the implementation of Article X being considered a priority.

### **Confidentiality and security**

Mr Chairman,

#### Information security

54. In early 2008, I established Security Audit Team V (SAT-V), tasked with sustaining regular external audits of the Secretariat's information systems used for the processing of confidential information. In September 2008, the SAT-V concluded its first audit and found that the Secretariat's information security regime adhered "to generally accepted security practices and controls to mitigate any identified risks" (EC-54/DG.16, dated 7 October 2008).
55. The Secretariat also continued to support the work of the Confidentiality Commission, which held its tenth meeting in May 2008 and issued the report currently before the Conference (CC-10/2, dated 27 May 2008). In order to further enhance the OPCW's Confidentiality Regime and following a recommendation from the Second Review Conference, the Secretariat outlined its plan for "Developing and Implementing Guidelines Regarding the Long-Term Handling of Confidential Information" in a Note to the Executive Council (EC-54/S/3, dated 13 August 2008).

### **International Cooperation and Assistance**

Mr Chairman,

#### Assistance and protection

56. In the course of this year, the Secretariat has continued to enhance its activities in the area of international cooperation and assistance. It would take up a considerable amount of time to enumerate the details of the many programmes that were carried out. I will, therefore, confine myself to presenting the highlights.
57. Regarding Article X of the Convention, the Secretariat has continued to support national capacity building against chemical weapons, provide expert advice for regional coordination for an emergency, held consultations with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Geneva with a view to strengthening coordination with other international organisations, conducted bilateral visits to 12 States Parties to assess their offers of assistance under paragraph 7 of Article X, and has also held a number of training courses.
58. Courses for first responders were held in Algeria, Colombia, Qatar, and Peru. A technical assessment visit was conducted in Sri Lanka to strengthen national capacity against chemical weapons. Training courses and workshops for regional coordination were conducted for States Parties in North and East Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Central Asia, and Central and Southeast Europe.

59. The Secretariat gratefully accepted offers from a number of States Parties to host assistance and protection courses to achieve a common understanding of the basic principles of international cooperation in the field of protection against chemical weapons. The Secretariat held nine such courses in China, Finland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Korea, Serbia, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, and Switzerland. An annual assistance-coordination workshop to review training programmes provided by Member States was held in May in the Czech Republic.
60. Hungary supported the sixth meeting of the Protection Network, which was held in Budapest at the beginning of October, and which aimed to develop goals and a future strategy in the field of assistance and protection. Most recently, a new regional initiative was launched in Senegal, involving capacity-building projects for States Parties from West Africa.

#### International cooperation

61. I will preface my remarks on international cooperation and assistance by informing the Conference that, in order to further develop its evaluation and assessment capabilities in the area of programme management, last November the Secretariat organised two training courses in this field. I would like to express our deep gratitude to the Government of the Netherlands for their support, including financial support for one of these events.
62. With regard to our substantive activities, the ninth edition of our flagship programme, the Associate Programme 2008, concluded on 19 September. The programme was expanded to accommodate more participants under the OPCW Programme to Strengthen Cooperation with Africa (hereinafter “the Africa Programme”), to which I will refer later. A total of 26 participants completed the programme successfully, 13 of them from Africa.
63. As part of the capacity-building programmes, a total of 31 qualified analytical chemists, including 11 participants from 8 African countries, were trained once again with the much-appreciated help of VERIFIN in Helsinki, Finland. We were also able to support 18 internships; 14 of these were research scholars from Africa. Nine of these internships were hosted at centres of excellence in Africa. This is a positive step in the implementation of the Africa Programme,
64. Our collaboration with the International Foundation for Science in Stockholm, Sweden, continues to grow in the area of Support for Research Projects. Together with them, as well as directly on our own, we have so far extended financial assistance to 249 research projects since the inception of the programme in 1998, of which 128 research projects have been for Africa.
65. Under the Conference Support Programme, the Secretariat has supported 26 scientific events, enabling as many as 151 scientists and researchers to participate in these scientific forums. Forty-nine of these sponsorships were offered to African nationals while Universities in Botswana and Malawi have also benefited from laboratory equipment donated by research institutions in Sweden and the United States of America.

66. Turning specifically to the Africa Programme, in addition to the concrete examples I have just mentioned, I wish to draw your attention to my Note to the Conference, describing in detail the achievements so far in the implementation of this project as well as the planned future steps (C-13/DG.8, dated 27 November 2008). A number of initiatives are also being envisaged for next year, such as the following, to mention but a few: a Basic Analytical Skills Course is planned in March 2009 at Protechnik Laboratories in South Africa; internship initiatives are being explored with Rhodes University in Kwa Zulu Natal in Durban, and the University of Western Cape in Belville in South Africa is also participating. In addition to hosting the Basic Analytical Chemistry Course mentioned above, Protechnik Laboratories have also offered to host fixed internships for citizens of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on a yearly basis, in a similar arrangement to that which exists between the OPCW and Spiez Laboratory and VERIFIN. We are, of course, extremely grateful for the support we are receiving from these South African institutions.
67. The full implementation and ultimate success of the Africa Programme require the active involvement of African States in identifying the specific needs of the continent. In this regard, one key premise of our strategy is to promote interaction with African countries, especially through their National Authorities, as well as with African institutions.
68. Another key component of this Programme is the availability of voluntary financial contributions by Member States to complement the additional resources that we are making available under the regular budget, within which I am proposing that 45% of the 6% increase provided for ICA activities for 2009 be spent on the Africa Programme. I therefore appeal once again to all of you to come forward with voluntary contributions to the Africa Programme.
69. As part of the Secretariat's broad-based collaboration with Africa, I visited the headquarters of the African Union (AU) on 19 November at the invitation of the AU Commission. On this occasion, I briefed the 15 members of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) about the implementation of the Convention and the work of the OPCW, and conveyed my appreciation for Africa's strong support and active contribution to the advancement of the goals of the Convention. I am delighted to note that this very morning I received a note from Ambassador Lamamra, Commissioner of the PSC, who expressed his satisfaction at the results of my visit to the PSC, and who has proposed that, as part of the African Programme, further cooperation between the Council and the OPCW be sought, for which purpose he himself will visit our Headquarters at an early date next year.
70. During my visit to Addis Ababa, I also met with the Chairperson of the Commission, H.E. Mr. Jean Ping, who reaffirmed the AU's continued support for the Convention and offered his good offices to promote the universality of the Convention in Africa. We also exchanged views on further strengthening the bonds of cooperation between the OPCW and the AU in the context of the memorandum of understanding signed by our two organisations in January 2006.
71. In the same context of enhancing concrete collaboration, a delegation from the Secretariat paid a visit to the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre

(KAIPTC), in Accra, Ghana, in September. In turn, representatives of the Centre visited OPCW headquarters in November and discussed ways of cooperating with the Secretariat with a view to promoting the goals of the Convention in the continent.

#### Implementation support

Mr Chairman,

72. Once again this year, the National Authorities held their annual regional meetings in order to exchange information and experiences and interact with the Secretariat on matters relating to the implementation of the Convention. The Tenth Annual Meeting of National Authorities brought together representatives from more than 100 National Authorities and discussed issues related to the role of industry as well as to the decisions and recommendations emanating from the Second Review Conference.
73. Thirteen technical-assistance visits were carried out to as many States Parties; three basic courses were organised, which were hosted by France, South Africa, and Qatar; thematic workshops and specialised training courses covering legal and customs-related aspects of the Convention and the training of escorts for inspections and declarations related to the implementation of the Convention were hosted by Argentina, Malaysia, Mexico, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (for Eastern Caribbean States), and Spain.
74. Throughout this year, the Secretariat continued to interact with the Inter-Parliamentary Union in order to sensitise parliamentarians to the need to adopt comprehensive national-implementing legislation.
75. I would also like to commend the initiative taken by France under its current Presidency of the European Union (EU) to organise an EU Day yesterday for National Authorities, which the Secretariat was very happy to assist. This special event afforded an opportunity to promote increased outreach and interaction among Member States and with the chemical industry on issues relevant to the Convention. Furthermore, it served to highlight the high degree of support and cooperation we receive from the EU, particularly through its Joint Actions. I look forward to the fourth of such valuable initiatives coming to fruition in the near future.
76. I also wish to mention that the Government of Turkey has very kindly indicated its willingness to host, in the autumn of 2009 in Istanbul, a subregional seminar on industry-related issues relevant to the implementation of the Convention. We are most grateful to the Government of Turkey and to the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce for their support for this meeting.
77. As regards the Asian region, the Secretariat is now working, in coordination with the Chinese authorities, to organise a workshop on Article VI-related issues, more precisely, customs-related issues, to be held in Hong Kong in conjunction with the Hong Kong Port Authority, in the summer of 2009. We are extremely grateful to the Government of China for making this important workshop possible.

## **Implementation of Article VII**

Mr Chairman,

78. The Second Review Conference reaffirmed that the full and effective national implementation of the obligations under the Convention is essential for the realisation of the object and purpose of the Convention. It also requested the Conference, at its annual sessions, to continue to review progress in this area and to encourage further advancements.
79. The main developments in States Parties, and the results achieved, are detailed in my report on the status of the implementation of Article VII, which the Conference has before it (C-12/DEC.9, dated 9 November 2007).
80. As the report shows, since the last Conference, two additional States Parties have designated their National Authority (namely the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau), thus bringing the number of National Authorities to 177. This means that 96% of States Parties have now met this fundamental obligation.
81. Further progress has continued to be made also with regard to the adoption of the necessary legislative and/or administrative measures to fully and effectively implement the Convention. Thus, as at November 2008, 83 States Parties, that is to say 45% of our membership, had adopted legislation covering all key areas. Among the 101 States Parties that have yet to enact legislation and/or adopt relevant administrative measures, almost all have taken steps to adopt the required measures.
82. Although of course very encouraging, the statistics also show that five years after the adoption of the Plan of Action Regarding the Implementation of Article VII Obligations (C-8/DEC.16, dated 24 October 2003), States Parties still have to complete this task and therefore have to continue their efforts to achieve full and effective national implementation of the Convention.

## **Universality and external relations**

Mr Chairman,

83. The Conference has before it a report on the implementation of the action plan on universality and an addendum to the report on the most recent developments in this area. Both documents describe in detail how the Secretariat has been implementing the decision on universality adopted by the Conference at its Twelfth Session (C-12/DEC.11, dated 9 November 2007), and the recommendations stemming from the Second Review Conference, which strongly urged all remaining States not Party to the Convention to ratify or accede to it as a matter of urgency and without preconditions.
84. Before Lebanon did so, two other States—the Republic of the Congo and Guinea-Bissau—joined the Convention this year. This leaves us with only 10 States that are not party to the Convention. At the same time, important developments towards joining the Convention have occurred in the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, and Iraq.

85. The Iraqi law on accession to the Convention was published in the Official Gazette of Iraq on 29 September 2008. We also received information that the instrument of accession is in the process of being signed and should soon be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
86. The Secretariat also received information that the Parliament of the Dominican Republic had approved the bill on ratification of the Convention. The ratification process seems also to have gained momentum in the Bahamas, where the Government has invited the Secretariat for a high-level visit to be led by the Deputy Director-General to Nassau in the second week of December.
87. We have continued with our efforts at promoting the universality of the Convention in the Middle East. It is my sincere hope that the recent accession by Lebanon will encourage Egypt, Israel, and Syria to join the Convention. I note with satisfaction that Israel, a signatory State, is participating in this Conference as an observer.
88. In addition, I am pleased to report to the Conference that, in response to letters that I had addressed to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Egypt and Israel following the Second Review Conference, each country has formally agreed to receive a goodwill technical visit by the Secretariat, on dates to be agreed upon for next year. The Secretariat technical team will be headed by our Legal Adviser and will include staff from the different Divisions. The purpose will be to provide the Egyptian and Israeli authorities with an update on the work of the OPCW and to elaborate on any matters of their interest relevant to the Convention. I wish to convey my sincere appreciation to these two countries for accepting my proposal and I encourage the Government of Syria, to which I have addressed a similar proposal, to also respond positively.
89. I also wish to express my gratitude to the Government of Turkey, which has kindly offered to host the Fourth Regional Workshop on the Universality of the Convention in the Mediterranean Basin and in the Middle East Region, to be held in Istanbul on 16 and 17 April 2009. The workshop will be sponsored under the 2007 European Union Joint Action in support for OPCW activities, and an invitation Note for the workshop will be issued shortly.
90. After the Second Review Conference, I also addressed communications to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with a proposal similar to the ones made to countries in the Middle East. As yet, there has been no response from them, although a senior representative of Myanmar has stated that the matter is under consideration.
91. In the case of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the absence of a response is in keeping with that country's previous approach towards the OPCW. In any case, we will continue to do our best to establish contacts with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to encourage them to join the Convention. A different attitude—in other words, if we were not to continue our demarches—for whatever reasons, might give the impression that we are prepared to make exceptions to the goal of universality, which I am sure is not the intention of our States Parties.

92. On the external relations side, let me also mention that I have paid what I consider to be very fruitful bilateral visits to 12 States Parties, and have addressed various international conferences on aspects relevant to our work, including a NATO seminar on the issue of non-proliferation held recently in Berlin.

### **The OPCW's contribution to global anti-terrorist efforts**

Mr Chairman,

93. Within the clear boundaries of its mandate, and keeping in mind that our Organisation is not an anti-terrorism agency, the OPCW continued to contribute to the international community's efforts in this area. This has been undertaken both through the promotion of the Convention's full implementation, as agreed by the Executive Council in 2001, and in the context of our cooperation with the United Nations.
94. Cooperation with the United Nations, I should note, is embedded in the provisions of the Convention and in its goals as a treaty that aims to contribute to the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and to advance the cause of international peace and security. In addition, our relationship with the United Nations is regulated by the Relationship Agreement signed in 2000, which formalises a close working relationship between the two organisations whilst at the same time it specifically recognises the independent status of the OPCW.
95. Article II, paragraph 3 of this Agreement states that the OPCW, within its competence and in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, shall cooperate with the General Assembly and with the Security Council by furnishing them, at the request of either, such assistance as may be required in the exercise of their respective responsibilities under the United Nations Charter.
96. Furthermore, the Report of the Second Review Conference concretely acknowledged the decisions of the United Nations in the field of counter-terrorism and the recently reaffirmed Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006, specifically calls for cooperation with the OPCW.
97. In that context, and in the same line, acting within the limits of its mandate, the Secretariat continues to cooperate with the committee created by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540, which, as we all know, seeks to impede the access to weapons of mass destruction by terrorists.
98. Following concerns expressed at both the First and Second Review Conferences that chemical facilities may become subject to attacks or other incidents that could lead to the release or theft of toxic chemicals, the Secretariat encourages States Parties to exchange experiences and discuss related issues. The OPCW can also contribute to enhancing the security of chemical facilities by developing the role of the Organisation as a platform of support for global cooperation in lessening the chemical threat by promoting awareness of chemical security best practices and by fostering cooperation between chemical professionals.

### **Relations with the United Nations**

Mr Chairman,

99. Since I have referred to the United Nations, let me add that our ties with this organisation were reaffirmed on the occasion of my recent addresses both to the Sixty-Third Session of the United Nations General Assembly and to its First Committee. United Nations Member States, on their part, continue to prove their overwhelming support for the Convention, as witnessed by the adoption each year of a consensus resolution on the implementation of the Convention by the United Nations General Assembly.
100. I am pleased to report that again this year, on 29 October 2008, such a resolution was approved by the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, without a vote. In this connection, I acknowledge the important contribution that Poland makes to this visible and tangible manifestation of the United Nations' support for the goals of the Convention.

### **Relations with Host Country**

Mr Chairman,

101. In terms of our relations with the Host Country, I am pleased to inform the Conference that the text of a Memorandum of Understanding on the OPCW Commissary has been finalised and was signed yesterday by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Secretariat. This would once again make the facility readily available to all accredited diplomats once the necessary practical arrangements are in place. Here again, I wish to convey my gratitude to the Government of the Netherlands for generously supporting 31 delegates from 21 of the least-developed countries to participate in the work of the Conference under the hotel-accommodation project. This support for delegates to be able to present here represents yet another valuable and tangible demonstration of the strong support of our Host Country to the effective work of the Organisation.

### **Administrative and financial matters**

#### 2009 Draft Programme and Budget

Mr Chairman,

102. Since I presented the Draft 2009 Programme and Budget to Member States at the end of June this year, extensive consultations have taken place. At this juncture, I am sure everyone is very concerned that so far, no consensus has been reached by members of the Executive Council on this important matter, and therefore that once again, the Executive Council might take away from the Conference part of its valuable time in order to address this issue. This, of course, is undesirable because it means that the Conference will not be able to use within the four short days foreseen for this meeting all the time available to it. This means the Member States might have, in some cases, to adopt and agree to the Budget without having had the time to thoroughly consider it and, least of all, to send it back to the capitals. We had an experience of this sort in

the Second Review Conference, which caused considerable upset to many Member States. I hope this year we will do our best to try and avoid that happening again.

103. I therefore call on all members of the Executive Council to make every effort in order to ensure that the Draft 2009 Programme and Budget is submitted to this Conference at the earliest and, therefore, that the Conference is given an opportunity to duly consider it and approve it. I believe it is our collective duty to do so.
104. Having said that, I would like to draw your attention to the following elements from the Draft 2009 Programme and Budget. The Draft Programme and Budget that I presented in June had been formulated with the intention of meeting all of the Organisation's core objectives in the most efficient and economic manner, and reflected zero-nominal growth in comparison to the 2008 Budget.
105. I would like to add that within the 2009 Draft Programme and Budget, enhanced resources under the International Cooperation and Assistance Programme are provided reflecting a 6% growth or an increase of EUR 0.32 million as compared to the 2008 budget. It is foreseen that approximately 45 percent of the 6% increase provided to International Cooperation and Assistance Division will be spent on the Africa Programme.
106. The Secretariat has been progressing towards a more results-based budgeting approach, in order to improve the quality and increase the impact of our programmes. This we have been doing consistently for a few years now. With a view to continuing this evolutionary process, the 2009 Programme and Budget provides for measurable key performance indicators, which will be evaluated in a performance report at the end of the year.

#### Administration and human resources

Mr Chairman,

107. I am pleased to note the unqualified audit opinion that the External Auditor has placed on the OPCW's financial statements for the period that ended on 31 December 2007. In his report, the External Auditor positively noted the internal-control systems which are in operation, as well as the improved management of the financial and budgetary functions of the Administrative Division. I am grateful to the External Auditor and his team for the support and advice that they have provided to the OPCW over the years. Indeed, they are concluding their functions this very year, and the External Auditor as of next year, as you all know, will be the Auditor-General of Germany.
108. In addition to the Secretariat's income-and-expenditure report for the period ending June 2008, which is also before the Conference (EC-54/DG-1, dated 21 July 2008), I would like to inform you that the outstanding 2008 assessed contributions as per 27 November 2008 reflect a receipt level of assessed contributions of 91%. Although there has been a significant improvement in receipts over the past few months, our ability to meet the core objectives in 2008 still depends on our receiving from States Parties their assessed national contributions in full and on time. I thus urge all States Parties that have not yet done so to comply with their financial obligations under the

Convention, and to make their 2008 payments as soon as possible. Additionally, I further encourage States Parties that are in arrears to regularise the payment of their outstanding annual contributions, including through multi-year payment plans, which are available to them.

109. The OPCW's commitment to implementing the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) remains unchanged, that is to say, these standards will be implemented by 2010.

#### Personnel matters and recruitment

110. In 2008, after significantly shortening the recruitment period for new staff, the Administration Division has continued its drive towards streamlining the Organisation's recruitment processes and procedures through improved documentation and through such automation as e-recruitment.
111. During the period from 1 January to 27 November 2008, a total number of 64 vacancies for fixed-term posts (47 professional and 17 general service) have been advertised and closed. Overall, the average number of recruitment days has been reduced in regard to both professional-level and general-service-level posts. I kindly ask Member States to disseminate vacancies on as wide a basis as possible.

#### Staff administration and entitlements and benefits

112. Further work of the Human Resources Branch, in terms of procedures, systems, expertise, and resources, continues to advance in a manner similar to other sister organisations in the United Nations Common System.
113. In the same vein, the Administration Division prepared papers on the entitlements that need to be aligned with those of the United Nations Common System. In this context, the Executive Council has agreed to implement the scheme of travel-related lump-sum payments, and has asked the Secretariat to report to it on how the scheme is working after a two-year period of implementation. The Council, at its Forty-Ninth Session, also agreed with the Secretariat, and has recommended an amendment to the education grant, the provisions of which are contained in Staff Regulation 3.2(a). At that Session, the Council further agreed on the provision of paternity leave.
114. Before closing my remarks on administrative matters, I would like to turn your attention for a moment to a new subject: the OPCW's contribution to environmental sustainability. Against a background of climate change, demand for renewable energy sources and an ever-growing world population, it is my view that the time is right for the OPCW to do its part in addressing this challenge. I am therefore pleased to announce that the Secretariat is developing an agenda to contribute to a sustainable environment, which will integrate initiatives in the three focus areas that have been identified by the United Nations: Procurement, Buildings Management and Staff Behaviour.

## **Second Review Conference**

Mr Chairman,

115. As regards the practical follow-up to the Second Review Conference, I have requested of my own team that we develop a number of related papers. The first paper refers to paragraphs 9.77 and 9.136 of the report of that Conference (RC-2/4, dated 18 April 2008) and relates to the development of a long-term strategy to address the relationships with the many stakeholders of the Convention.
116. Indeed, the Second Review Conference recommended that the OPCW continue to develop a multi-stakeholder approach to promote universality and awareness about the Convention. In this context, efforts have been made with a view to enhancing relationships with stakeholders during a number of key events of the Organisation, such as the First and Second Review Conferences, and also on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention. I also paid visits to, or received visits from, representatives of chemical industry associations. In 2008, an open forum took place at the OPCW Headquarters on 9 April, during the convening of the Second Review Conference. It had been organised by non-governmental organisations that are interested in the Convention. Chemical industry associations also participated in this forum.
117. A second paper to be prepared refers to paragraph 9.94 of the report of the Second Review Conference. It will consider how the OPCW can make a contribution to enhancing the security of chemical facilities. Furthermore, I will shortly submit to the Council my views on possible options to enhance the interactions between the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), States Parties, and the policy-making organs, while making best use of governmental experts. This document will include the lessons learned from a meeting of governmental experts, which will be convened in the second week of February next.

## **Scientific Advisory Board**

Mr Chairman,

118. Allow me also to add that, as a follow-up to what has been done in preparation for its report, the SAB recently met and discussed aspects related to advances in science and technology and their potential impact on the implementation of the Convention. It also started to review, as recommended by the Second Review Conference, the operational requirements and technical specifications for inspection equipment, in coordination with the relevant Divisions of the Secretariat. Recommendations on this topic should be discussed and finalised at its next session in 2009.
119. Since the establishment of the SAB Trust Fund in 2006, some EUR 240,000 was contributed by 10 States Parties. However, there is a need to continue to secure further resources, with a view to allowing the Board to continue addressing other questions, as raised in its report to the Second Review Conference. I hope that more Member States will make voluntary contributions in order to assist in the work of the Board. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the operating rules of the

Fund also allow for contributions from non-governmental organisations, institutions, or private donors.

Mr Chairman,

120. I wish to convey my deepest gratitude to all States Parties that have offered assistance or have made voluntary contributions in support of the work of the Organisation and of the implementation of its programmes, particularly, but certainly not limited to, the area of international cooperation and assistance. I have already referred to the EU Joint Actions, but I would also like to refer to each and every individual contribution by each Member State which has done so. I would like to express the hope that this collective cooperation will continue in the future, since without it we could not progress as rapidly towards fulfilling the mandate that the Convention has given us, and promoting the realisation of its goals.
121. As we continue to progress in a wide range of areas relevant to our work, I wish to make a personal observation about the consistent support of our States Parties that has made the OPCW an exemplary organisation in more than one respect. Our deliberative process has been marked by constructive engagement and consensus. A strong culture of adherence to multilateralism has encouraged States Parties to walk always that extra mile to reach agreement on issues critical to the advancement of the fundamental goals of the treaty, seeking to banish forever the spectre of chemical weapons from our world. In short, the commitment of all of you, distinguished colleagues, and your devotion have created an example of how multilateralism can address, productively and with good chances of success, the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction.

Mr Chairman,

122. I wish the Conference a successful session, and thank you for your attention.

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