

Monday 30 November 2009

**NEW ZEALAND STATEMENT
TO THE 14TH CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES
TO THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

**Delivered by Michael Green, Chargé d'affaires a.i.,
New Zealand Permanent Representation to the OPCW**

Mr Chairman, distinguished delegates, Director-General.

New Zealand welcomes this opportunity to again place on record our support for the Chemical Weapons Convention, a key treaty in the multilateral disarmament framework. We commend the continuing efforts of States Parties to meet the Convention's objectives. We express our appreciation for the work of the Technical Secretariat.

This will be Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter's last Conference as Director-General. We thank him for his hard and productive work in this role. The forthcoming change of Director-General draws attention to the considerable achievements of the OPCW under his leadership, while reminding us also of ongoing challenges his successor will face.

The Director General has been tireless in his interaction with both States Parties and those States not yet party. We welcome the progress that has been made in expanding adherence to the Convention, and encourage those states still outside the Convention to recognise the benefits that membership offers for their own security, as well as the contribution that universal adherence will make to global peace and security.

National implementation of the Convention is fundamental to its effectiveness. We were pleased to see in the most recent report from the Technical Secretariat that increasing numbers of States Parties are taking steps towards full implementation. There is clearly still some distance to go, but the figure of 102 States Parties that have yet to enact legislation covering all areas belies the actual progress that is being made in drafting the necessary legislation. Much of this is due to the assistance that the Technical Secretariat provides to States which face the constraints of small bureaucracies and competing political priorities, and to the information it provides on progress. We look forward to this Conference taking a decision on Article VII that supports the continuation of this work. For its part, New Zealand will continue to promote commitment to full implementation, in particular in our region.

We appreciate the pragmatic approach that the Director General has taken to preparation each year of the annual budget of the OPCW. Maintaining zero nominal growth across five consecutive budgets is an achievement that

demonstrates the Secretariat's prudent management of its financial and human resources. This prudence is especially welcome in view of the global financial situation. We consider that the Secretariat has increased its efficiency in recent years, with fewer staff serving more States Parties. We commend the Director General's ongoing efforts to strike a balance between the clear need to step up OCPF inspections and the organisation's capacity to undertake additional inspections. Monitoring and inspection of other chemical production facilities is an enormous task. This, in addition to the inspection of Schedule 1, 2 and 3 facilities, is a vital component of this organisation's contribution to non-proliferation. New Zealand is keen to see an increase in the number of other chemical production facilities inspected in the future.

At this Conference we expect to confirm the appointment of the next Director General, Ahmet Üzümcü, who will take up his position in July 2010. The contact we have had so far with Ambassador Üzümcü gives us confidence in his ability to lead this organisation through the challenging times ahead.

Foremost in our minds, as 2012 approaches, is the importance of intensifying efforts towards destruction of all chemical weapons. For all states represented here, achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible elimination of weapons of mass destruction is surely an important foreign policy goal. We welcome the Executive Council's decision at its recent session to start discussing issues related to meeting the final extended deadlines for the destruction of chemical weapons. We look forward to the Chair's report on these consultations.

We welcomed the productive outcomes of the 58th session of the Executive Council last month, at which agreement was reached by consensus on the appointment of the new Director General, the budget, and a number of destruction issues. Now that a decision and guidelines have emerged on the applicable concentration limits for mixtures containing Schedule 2A and 2A* chemicals, we are keen to focus in the industry cluster on enhancing the verification regime to allow the sites most relevant to the Convention to be accurately targeted.

New Zealand looks forward to a similarly productive atmosphere in the week ahead. We hope for a cooperative approach among States Parties. We encourage them to offer strong support for the Technical Secretariat without micro-managing its work. We think it is important not to divert attention from progress towards our shared goals: universal adherence, coupled with full and effective implementation of the Convention; the destruction of all existing chemical weapons; and maintenance of this position through an effective verification regime.

Mr Chairman, I wish you well in your important task, and pledge the full support of the New Zealand delegation as we work towards a world free of chemical weapons.