

**NATIONAL STATEMENT OF SINGAPORE
DELIVERED BY MR. DESMOND KOH
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AT THE FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
THE HAGUE, 30 NOVEMBER 2009**

Introduction

Mr Chairman

It is a great honour for me to address the Fourteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties (CSP). I would like to begin by congratulating you on your appointment as the Chairman of the 14th CSP and I am confident that the Conference will conclude successfully under your leadership.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to Director-General Rogelio Pfirter for his contributions to the OPCW in the past eight years. The end of Ambassador Pfirter's term as Director-General in July 2010 will be a significant milestone, as we recall the progress that the Convention has made in its efforts to abolish the use of toxic chemicals as weapons of choice. Ambassador Pfirter has led with great passion and commitment towards the ultimate aim to promote global security. On behalf of my delegation, I thank Ambassador Pfirter for his tireless efforts in bringing the Convention through its challenging times and steering us closer to the goals of the Convention. I wish him all the best in his future undertakings.

I would also like to state my delegation's support for the recommendation of the Executive Council for His Excellency Mr Ahmet Üzümcü of Turkey to be appointed as the next Director-General. I believe the Convention will continue to make further progress under his leadership.

Universality

Mr Chairman

As we enter the 13th year of the Chemical Weapons Convention, we are moving closer to our common goal in the complete elimination of chemical weapons. This year, the Convention has welcomed three new members, bringing its membership to 188. Singapore welcomes the ratification of the Convention by Iraq, the Dominican Republic and Bahamas, and commends the efforts of the Technical Secretariat in its continuous pursuit of universality.

We must not, however, be complacent with the current level of participation as the complete implementation of the Convention is only attainable with full universality. I therefore urge all remaining non-member States to ratify or accede to the Convention without further delay, as universal adherence is critical to the complete eradication of chemical weapons.

Destruction of Chemical Weapons Stockpiles

Singapore is pleased to note that, as of March this year, India has completely destroyed its chemical weapons stockpiles, making it the third State Party to do so. Singapore applauds India and the other possessor States Parties, which have dedicated much resources and efforts toward their chemical weapons destruction programmes. It is only with such continued perseverance from States Parties that the declared chemical weapons stockpiles can be entirely destroyed by 29 April 2012.

Singapore's Commitment to Non-proliferation Efforts and National Implementation Measures under Article VII

Despite being a non-possessor State, Singapore places strong emphasis on the importance of non-proliferation by actively exercising due diligence in our

implementation and enforcement of a comprehensive set of legislation., We are also mindful of the need to strike a balance between control and facilitation so as to ensure that we do not hinder legitimate activities not prohibited under the Convention. This is rendered possible with the rationalisation of the requirements and processes of our National Authority and other relevant agencies, through constant streamlining and reviews of legislation and benchmarking against the best practices of other Member States.

Singapore also contributes to the Convention by hosting workshops aimed at augmenting the national implementation measures of Member States. In this regard, it is my honour to announce that the National Authority of Singapore will be co-hosting the Advance Course for Personnel of the National Authorities from Asian States in the second quarter of 2010. This Course aims to reinforce the understanding of participants who have already attended the Basic Course and to better equip them in the administration of domestic provisions complementary to the Convention.

Guidelines for Declarations

Mr Chairman

Singapore is committed to making timely and accurate declaration submissions to the Technical Secretariat. The useful guidelines provided by the Technical Secretariat, and decisions arising from the Conferences and Executive Council have been particularly helpful in minimising declaration discrepancies among the submissions by the States Parties. Singapore commends such efforts by the Technical Secretariat and seeks the consideration of further guidelines which would not only reduce declaration discrepancies, but also reinforce the purpose of the verification regime.

Impact of Scientific and Industrial Developments on the Verification Regime

With advances in science and technology, it is crucial for the Convention to continuously review itself to keep pace with globalisation, business norms and trends of the chemical and biological industries. While new technologies emerge, so will new threats posed by chemical weapons. The Scientific Advisory Board, which reviews and assesses such scientific developments and their impact on the Convention, therefore plays a key role in supporting the work of the Convention.

The Workshop on “Matters Related to Other Chemical Production Facilities (OCPFs)”, which concluded a few days ago, is a good example of how States Parties could be engaged in moving forward with such technological improvements. The workshop helped to enhance the participants’ understanding of the OCPF verification regime, through exploring the past, present and future roles of the Convention. Singapore will continue to participate and support such programmes which will help in sustaining the Convention beyond the eradication of chemical weapons.

Singapore’s Pledge of Assistance and Protection Against Chemical Weapons, under Article X

At the same time, Singapore will continue to facilitate programmes with regard to the assistance and protection against chemical weapons, as set forth in Article X of the Convention. In March this year, Singapore’s Civil Defence Force had successfully conducted the inaugural “Emergency Response to Chemical Incidents” course which outlined the detection of and protection against chemical warfare agents.

Next week, Singapore will be hosting the 6th Singapore International Symposium for Protection Against Toxic Substances (SISPAT) and the 2nd International Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Explosives Operations Conference (ICOC) which is co-organised by our Defence Science Organisation National Laboratories and Singapore Armed Forces’ Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Explosives Defence Group. The

three-day programme, with the theme “Countering the Evolution of Threats through Strengthening Ops-Tech Convergence”, is aimed at fostering interactions among scientists, engineers, military planners and professionals from the government, academia and industrial sectors to share the latest knowledge and experience in defence against unconventional threats.

With such programmes to strengthen our capacity in preparing and protecting ourselves against any chemical threats and incidents, Singapore will continue to pledge our technical expertise to the OPCW. We urge other States Parties to do the same.

Conclusion

Mr Chairman

There is no doubt that the Chemical Weapons Convention needs the full support and commitment of every nation in the disarmament and non-proliferation of chemical weapons. While we celebrate the progress achieved thus far, we have yet to reach our ultimate goal of the eradication of chemical weapons. Despite the many challenges ahead, the Member States’ commitments towards the elimination of chemical weapons, coupled with a sound and judicious leadership, will lead us to a world free of chemical weapons.

Thank you.