



**OPCW**

**Conference of the States Parties**

Seventeenth Session  
26 – 29 November 2012

C-17/NAT.29  
27 November 2012  
ENGLISH and RUSSIAN only

**BELARUS**

**STATEMENT BY ELENA GRITSENKO  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS  
TO THE OPCW AT THE  
SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairman,  
Mr Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me, on behalf of the Belarusian delegation, to congratulate you on the opening of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and to wish you success in the work towards achieving the objectives of the Conference.

Mr Chairman,

The delegation of the Republic of Belarus supports the congratulations addressed to you on your election to the post of Chairman of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. We are certain that this session, under your able leadership, will give a real additional stimulus to the achievement of the key aims and purposes of the Convention.

We are also grateful to the Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, for his informative statement containing a summary of the work of the OPCW in the period since the Sixteenth Session of the Conference, and in which the future priorities of the OPCW are set out.

The Republic of Belarus has a fully responsible attitude to the fulfilment of its obligations under the Convention and has, on a number of occasions, given a practical demonstration of its commitment to the policy of ensuring general security; it intends to remain in the future an active participant in this process. That is why we are sincerely striving for fruitful and productive work at this Conference, and for active cooperation with all States Parties.

The Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties is taking place in a year that is special for the Organisation—the year of the fifteenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention.



Over the last 15 years, the OPCW has become an inalienable component of the system of international security. The States Parties have achieved significant success in the destruction of one of the most dangerous kinds of weapons of mass destruction created by man.

Nevertheless, unfortunately, our world is not becoming any safer. Bloody regional conflicts, almost never-ending ecological and technogenic catastrophes, the drug and people trade, and international terrorism— these are the challenges and threats of our time and they require a collective response. Only by joining our efforts will we be able in practice to make our world a safer place.

That is why we cannot fail to be concerned at the fact that a number of countries, including some located in regions which are troubled from the point of view of security, still remains outside the framework of the Convention. The Republic of Belarus considers universal, multilateral agreements in the fields of disarmament and security to be irreplaceable instruments capable of ensuring, in practice, the existence of a single set of ground rules for all states without exception. That is why we support without reservation the appeal to the remaining states urgently to sign or ratify this most important document. We stress that the assumption by these states of the obligations under the Convention will not only facilitate the strengthening of global security, but also allow them to participate in effective international cooperation in the area of the Convention.

The unconditional achievement of the goals of the Convention is directly dependent on the complete destruction of the stockpiles of chemical weapons which have accumulated in the world.

While stressing the significant and unswerving progress already achieved by the states that possess chemical weapons along the road to destruction of their stockpiles, the Republic of Belarus expresses its confidence that, in the spirit of trust and transparency, and with the effective cooperation of all the members of the OPCW, the key task of finally ridding the globe of chemical weapons will be completed in as short a time as possible.

We also attach great importance to the full and early implementation of Article VII of the Convention. The unbreakable connection between universality and the effective implementation of the Convention at national level is obvious. The existence of the necessary national legislation is essential both to guarantee the non-proliferation of chemical weapons and to ensure effective international cooperation in the field of the peaceful use of chemical technologies.

Belarus has a fully responsible attitude to fulfilling its obligations under the Convention at national level, and is prepared to render assistance to other countries setting up their national systems for implementing the Convention, on the basis of its own experience.

At the same time, we lay particular emphasis on the importance of the future mobilisation of international cooperation in the field of the use of chemistry for peaceful purposes, as provided for in the Convention.

The OPCW has always shown openness to cooperation with international organisations in the field of international security, and with States Parties, and has been a solid platform for the conduct of bilateral and multilateral meetings with the aim of “synchronising watches” and coordination of actions.

International training programmes conducted by the OPCW facilitate the successful economic and technological development of Member States under Article XI of the Convention. The value of the OPCW's contribution to the training and instruction of specialists in the field of chemical technologies, the peaceful use of chemistry and the dangerous properties of chemicals, as well as in the field of civilian defence and protection from chemical weapons, is impossible to exaggerate; this, in turn, increases the capacity and readiness of States Parties to a more effective implementation of the Convention at national level.

The Republic of Belarus is prepared for the future to offer all assistance possible to the international cooperation of the OPCW, and to be an active participant in this process.

The Republic of Belarus considers the balanced development of all the key elements of the Convention over a fifteen-year period to be a sound basis and a pre-requisite for the future growth of the credibility of the OPCW, and for the effective completion of the mid- and long-term tasks facing the OPCW, the principal of these being the complete destruction not only of chemical weapons but also of the threat of their future re-emergence.

In April 2013, the Third Review Conference will be held; it will sum up our work over the last five years and define the future medium-term priorities of the OPCW.

We are certain that this Seventeenth Session of the Conference will lay a solid foundation for the conduct of the Third Review Conference in 2013. Allow me to assure you of our readiness for constructive joint work to ensure its successful conclusion.

I thank you for your attention, Mr Chairman, and should be obliged if you would distribute this statement as an official document of the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

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