



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Seventeenth Session
26-29 November 2012

C-17/NAT.34
26 November 2012
ENGLISH and SPANISH only

MEXICO

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR EDUARDO IBARROLA NICOLÍN,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MEXICO TO THE OPCW,
AT THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairman,

Allow me to express my sincere congratulations on your election to the Chair of this Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, and to assure you of my personal support and the support of my delegation in the conduct of your work. I am certain that your broad professional experience and outstanding diplomatic qualities will bring this session to a successful conclusion.

I should also like to recognise the work of your predecessor, Ambassador Paul Arkwright, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, for his wise conduct of the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

I should also like to greet the Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, and his team at the Technical Secretariat.

On 29 April last, fifteen years had passed since the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. This is a historical landmark of which the international community should be proud. Let us recall that the Convention is the only international treaty to prohibit an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, with an effective and exemplary verification mechanism, the only one of its kind, which means that inspections can be conducted at any time and in any place, without the State Party having any right to refuse. This regime represents the highest verification in the field of disarmament.

In April 2013, we will hold the Third Review Conference. This will be our chance to evaluate the progress in consolidating the regime established by the Convention and the remaining challenges. Universality of the Convention is one of the challenges which cause Mexico concern. Although there are now 188 States Parties – which is a very high figure when compared to other instruments – eight States remain outside



our treaty. We send an earnest appeal to those countries to sign and ratify the Convention and to contribute to the effort to eliminate this threat from the face of the earth.

Another challenge is represented by the blockage in the decision-making process, which derives from an erroneous interpretation of consensus. As we have stressed both here and in other fora, consensus cannot be interpreted as a right of veto possessed by some to hamper the agreement of the majority. Consensus ought to be used to create agreements that are beneficial to all but without paralysing multilateral action, as has happened in these proceedings and in others.

Then there is the challenge of implementing the Convention. While the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties took important decisions, which commit the possessor States to fulfil the obligations enshrined in the Convention and to continue with their destruction plans under OPCW verification, complete destruction of the arsenals continues to be vital for the credibility of the Convention and for the creation of a safer world.

Mexico repeats that the mere existence of weapons of mass destruction, in this case chemical weapons, is a threat to international peace and security. We have made progress in the proscription of these devices. However, we must make sure that they are totally eliminated.

Mexico's commitment to the full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention has been the driver which has led to efficient mechanisms being found at national level for implementation of all the provisions of the Convention. That is why my country conducted a series of legal and operational adjustments to the control of the export of chemical weapons precursors, which allowed it to submit its request for entry to the Australia Group. We hope that this will soon become a reality.

As the States Parties know, one of the prerequisites for entry to the Australia Group is precisely ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Mexico is convinced that following the guidelines of the Australia Group represents progress towards fulfilment of its CWC obligations, and in that context, my country now has an effective mechanism which contributes to the achievement of the objectives of the Convention to avoid the proliferation of chemical weapons and to promote the peaceful use of dual-use chemicals that are regulated by the Convention.

Finally, the celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of our Convention was unfortunately clouded by the risk that this kind of weapon will continue to be considered as legitimate weapons of war by some actors. Therefore, we deplore the declarations made by the Syrian authorities on 23 July last, in which they threaten the use of chemical weapons to thwart any foreign aggression. The use of chemical weapons, by any actor and under any circumstance, would run contrary to international law and international humanitarian law, and would lead to a huge humanitarian catastrophe.

Unlike previous years, we have come to this Seventeenth Session of the Conference with the Executive Council's recommendation on the draft Programme and Budget of the Organisation for 2013. We, the States Parties, should congratulate ourselves for

the efforts made and compromises reached by one and all of us over the last months to arrive at a consensus. It is now up to the Conference to adopt the decision and we appeal to all the States Parties to support it.

We, the States Parties, are aware that the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons needs to adapt itself to current realities as regards its own duties, with a view to the global economic and financial situation facing us. However, Mexico feels that any discussion on possible changes in priorities ought to take into account two key aspects: firstly, that the Chemical Weapons Convention covers both destruction and production, stockpiling, development and use of chemical weapons; and secondly, that the integrity and credibility of the Convention must not be affected.

Since last July, under the able guidance of Ambassador Nassima Baghli, Permanent Representative of Algeria to the OPCW, we have been working to prepare the Review Conference in the framework of the Open-Ended Working Group. A little more than a week ago, we concluded the first phase of this process, and shall very shortly start the second with the negotiation of the draft report which Ambassador Baghli will soon submit to us. Just as during the first phase, it is our wish that the second phase, and the Review Conference itself, continue to be conducted in an open, transparent and inclusive manner.

It is Mexico's wish that the final product of this process reflect the concerns of all parties and that it should reinforce, rather than weaken, both the regime established by the Convention and the Organisation.

I should be obliged if this statement could be treated as an official document of this Conference.

Thank you very much.

--- 0 ---