



THE HAGUE

**Statement by Mr. Kurtuluş Aykan,
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.,
Permanent Representation
of the Republic of Turkey to the OPCW
First Counselor**

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Chemical Weapons Convention
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Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Director-General,
Distinguished Representatives,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me a distinct pleasure to address the Conference of the States Parties of the OPCW at its most significant annual event. Seizing this opportunity, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairperson, on your election to the Chair of this Conference. I have no doubt that under your able leadership and Director-General Üzümcü's guidance, we, the States Parties, will yet again make decisions that will play a key role on the OPCW's future trajectory.

I would also like to commend Ambassador Peter Goosen of South Africa as the outgoing Chair, for his contributions to the success of the Seventeenth Conference of the States Parties held last year as well as to the work of the OPCW since the previous Conference.

Furthermore, I am delighted to congratulate you, Mr. Director-General, on the occasion of the awarding of the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize to the OPCW.

Turkey believes that this is not only a profound recognition of OPCW's achievements to date, but it is also a well-deserved acknowledgement of this organization as an embodiment of what we, the members of international community, can do once we have commitment and will to take concrete measures with a view to reinforcing the global peace and security.

As we are all well aware, 2013 has been a busy year for the OPCW. Besides the regular work pertaining to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, this year we have had a successful Third Review Conference, where we have taken stock of our past achievements and defined a way forward for the improvement of the implementation of the CWC.

Again this year, we have seen the number of the States Parties increase from 188 to 190, as a result of the accession of Somalia and Syria to the CWC respectively. This is a significant progress as it indicates that we have approached a bit more to the goal of full universality of the Convention.

However, on top of all, this year we have also faced with and witnessed the brutal reality: At this day and age, chemical weapons can still be deployed as a means of war. There can be no justification of this horrible act. While strongly condemning this utter crime against humanity, Turkey firmly believes that the perpetrators of this conspicuous violation of international law must be held accountable.

For this reason, Turkey welcomes the total elimination of all the chemical weapons in Syria. We congratulate the United States and the Russian Federation for their efforts on this matter.

Given the extraordinary circumstances, we are cognizant of the fact that the destruction of chemical weapons in Syria is a huge undertaking for this organization. It is for the first time in the history of the OPCW that its inspectors are assisting a State Party to eliminate its chemical weapons in a battle zone.

With this in mind, we would like to express our gratitude to Director-General Üzümcü and UN Special Coordinator Ms. Sigrid Kaag for their leadership as well as to the members of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission in Syria for their dedication and commitment.

To support the Mission, Turkey has made a financial contribution of fifty thousand USD to the OPCW Trust Fund for Syria. We will continue to lend our full support to the Joint Mission for achieving its goals.

We believe the timelines defined by the respective Executive Council decisions for destruction of chemical weapons in Syria should be met without delay and without any conditions whatsoever.

Let me also highlight that Turkey has strong conviction that the international community should continue its efforts to make sure that deployment of chemical weapons will not occur elsewhere in any part of the world. In this context, Turkey appeals to those countries who have not yet joined the Chemical Weapons Convention regime to do so without further delay. To achieve the full universality of the Convention, we will continue to support the efforts by the Technical Secretariat.

Last but not least, let me express Turkey's strong support for the reappointment of Mr. Ahmet Üzümcü as the Director-General of the OPCW for another term of four years. We believe Mr. Üzümcü deserves the full consensus of all States Parties once again.

We are proud of the fact that over the past years, under Mr. Üzümcü's effective leadership, the OPCW has clearly bolstered its prominence in the field of international peace and security. For this reason, we have no doubt that during his next term of office, our organization will continue to thrive and approach more to our ultimate objective, a world free from the threat of the use of chemical weapons.

Before I conclude, I would like to request that this statement be treated as an official document of this session of the Conference.

Thank you.