



**OPCW**

**Conference of the States Parties**

Eighteenth Session  
2 – 5 December 2013

C-18/NAT.37  
3 December 2013  
ENGLISH and FRENCH only

**CANADA**

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JAMES LAMBERT PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA TO THE OPCW AT THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Distinguished Chairperson, Director-General and Permanent Representatives, colleagues, and if I may add, fellow Nobel Peace Prize recipients.

Mr Chairperson, let me begin by welcoming your election to this position and pledging my delegation's cooperation during these proceedings. I also take this opportunity to thank your predecessor for his work in preparing this conference, as well as the team of the General Committee of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference of States Parties, the Director-General and the staff of the Technical Secretariat who have provided everything we need in order to ensure we can work this week. It would be remiss if I did not thank the Government of the Netherlands for hosting us at the World Forum this year, and the next two years, whilst the facility undergoes improvements to meet the needs of Conferences such as ours.

This Conference has important things to accomplish at the conclusion of what has been an exceptional year for the OPCW and the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

In the seven months since the Third Review Conference, the OPCW has seen changes which underscore the validity of the conclusions of that Conference as published in its report. This forward-looking document is the result of a year-long preparatory process of consultation and careful consideration regarding the current and future needs of the OPCW. We have drawn upon the expertise of civil society organisations whose interest in the OPCW is essential to our future. The impressive and unprecedented broad participation by civil society organisations at that Conference acknowledges that expertise on this matter rests outside governments and within the scientific community and centres of research. Industrial organisations, a key subset directly affected by the Convention's industry verification regime, renewed their support of our review process through the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), in consultation with the Director-General's Scientific Advisory Board. What we can all agree to take away from this Third Review Conference process is that we must never stop thinking about the future and develop the necessary tools for the effective implementation of the mandate we have given ourselves in the Chemical Weapons Convention. In this respect, and to further illustrate this exceptional year, the need to think of and plan for the future was clearly demonstrated when we, as Parties to the Convention, were confronted with the reality that chemical weapons had been used in Syria. Though smaller alleged chemical weapon attacks occurred during the spring, it was the attack of August 21 on the Ghouta suburb of Damascus that set off a chain of events which led to the entry of



Syria into the Chemical Weapons Convention. Canada condemned this despicable use of such horrendous weapons leading to the murder of too many innocent men, women and children. Those responsible will, one day, be brought to account. For now, we salute the work of US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Federation Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov who brought forward the plan for the rapid destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. The challenge posed by the safe and rapid destruction of Syria's stockpile, its production and storage facilities is a complicated one. It has demanded much time and attention on the part of all the States Parties and will do so over the next year. However, in the interest of humanity we, as defenders of the view that chemical weapons have no place in this world, must do everything in our power to reach our goal. Failure is not an option.

The dedicated staff of the Technical Secretariat who have stepped up and contributed with such dedication to the success of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission in Syria deserve all our admiration. Canada wishes to thank the brave volunteers who travelled inside Syria to bring their essential technical and verification expertise to this successful endeavour. Going into a country torn by civil war and putting themselves at great personal risk is not what they could have expected when they joined the Organisation. Also, many of the Technical Secretariat staff who remained here took on additional duties and responsibilities to enable volunteers to be freed-up for the work in Syria. This pragmatic and flexible spirit permeates the Technical Secretariat. We are keenly aware of the high degree of professionalism exerted at all levels.

Many will join me in thanking our Director-General Ahmet Üzümcü, whom we will gladly reappoint for a second term during this Conference, for his foresight in beginning to work on a detailed arrangement with the United Nations in line with the OPCW-UN agreement of 2002. In the fall of 2010, OPCW and United Nations' personnel began meeting to put flesh on the bones of that arrangement, a process which led to an arrangement in September 2012 which allowed for the United Nations investigation of alleged chemical weapons use mission with OPCW participation to take place. Having welcomed the September 2012 arrangement, Canada followed through on April 7, 2013, when Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird announced our contribution of CAD 2 million to the OPCW to support the provision of assistance to the United Nations investigation in Syria then being planned by Professor Ake Sellström. That mission is in the process of finalising its report and has already provided crucial information for our understanding of the situation with respect to the use of chemical weapons in Syria. It paved the way for the establishment of the OPCW-UN Joint Mission for the elimination of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic. This collaborative approach is one which has so far made an impressive start towards fulfilling its mandate.

Canada welcomes the nomination of Ms Sigrid Kaag as the Special Coordinator to lead this joint mission. The UN-OPCW Joint Mission is operating in what has been termed the most challenging and dangerous country situation ever. Yet, Ms Kaag and her team have hit the ground running with an eyes-wide open approach. There will be many lessons learned from these missions which will serve the Technical Secretariat to excellent effect in its future preparedness planning and its capacity to respond to an investigation of alleged use, or the call for a challenge inspection. The Technical Secretariat has already begun an on-going integration of lessons learned from its experiences, and we look forward to discovering more about the best practices and strategies for increased operational readiness which will be developed.

We must learn from our experience to build the future of this international disarmament Organisation and ensure its capacity to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons is continuously strengthened. As the situation unfolding in Syria so graphically reminds us, ensuring the non-proliferation of chemical weapons, and the non-proliferation of knowledge used to create chemical weapons, is a core part of the OPCW's mandate. Such vigilant monitoring is the absolute minimum to maintain a world free of chemical weapons.

The operations in Syria will lead to a significant one-time increase in the budget of our Organisation in order to pay for this unprecedented disarmament work in a dangerous environment. However the Executive Council's recommendations on the 2014 programme and budget will ensure that we return to our long maintained tradition of zero nominal growth in 2015.

Now, as destruction in Syria and elsewhere progresses, the OPCW must continue to maintain its focus on non-proliferation, including through a robust industry inspection regime which is key to preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons. A host of issues, that were referred to in past Review Conferences to the Executive Council, have found resolution through the Industry Cluster consultations mechanism. But not all is positive. Timely submission of accurate and complete declarations remains an elusive goal. Transfer discrepancies remain an intractable, endemic problem that significantly hinders the Technical Secretariat's task of detecting transfer trends. A solution to this problem lies in an increase in information exchanges between National Authorities, an approach which has paid dividends for Canada in helping us identify previously unknown companies with declarable activities.

A look at the work which remains to be done, as well as underlining the continued urgency for non-States Parties to join the Convention, reminds us that the Convention is not self-implementing. National implementation legislation is essential for the realisation of the object and purpose of the Convention. While recognising the progress made, it is disconcerting to see that less than half of all Member States have legislation in place that covers all key areas. This is hardly reassuring that unlawful activities with toxic chemicals are being undetected by States with incomplete legislation. We urge those Member States that have not yet completed their national implementation measures to do so as a matter of priority and pledge to help in any way we can.

This brings me to the final exceptional event of this year: the international recognition of the quiet and steadfast work of the OPCW which was crowned by the attribution of the Nobel Peace Prize. The tireless dedication over the past sixteen years, of those who have served States Parties here in The Hague to further our goal of ridding the world of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, was justly recognised. This recognition primarily belongs to the current and past staff of the Technical Secretariat who have built an enviable reputation for professional thoroughness and quietly getting on with their important job. We can all be proud of what we have achieved thus far in our quest to rid the world of chemical weapons. Canada very much welcomes this honour bestowed upon the OPCW and thanks the Nobel Committee for highlighting this model disarmament Organisation.

In order for the OPCW to maintain the talent and retain the expertise which has led to the Nobel Peace Prize, Canada wishes to support an initiative led by Bulgaria, Norway, South Africa and Sweden to adapt the OPCW tenure policy by granting the Director-General a limited authority to rehire some inspectors. This will give the Organisation some flexibility in staffing its core component, the Inspectorate. This is a change whose time has come. The

OPCW has long been the only Organisation with a tenure policy not to allow itself this flexibility. For Canada, this innovation will be part of our Organisation's knowledge management capacity in the future. We believe that tenure policy has proven its worth in the OPCW, but as the number of experts with hands-on experience dwindles through the very success of the OPCW in implementing its mandate, it will be important to retain some of that expertise for a slightly longer period as there will be few other repositories of such knowledge upon which the OPCW could draw should an additional need arise. There are of course other strategies which will be used as part of the endeavours to increase the OPCW knowledge management capacity. This is a mandate we have given the Technical Secretariat to explore and develop as it prepares for the transition to the post-destruction phase of its existence.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to welcome the decision of the Director-General to make 2014 the year of Education and Outreach. Though he could not have known when this project was being developed, months ago, that the world would turn its eyes to the OPCW and put it in the spotlight as never before. Events in Syria have unfortunately made it much easier to explain the importance of the OPCW's mandate. In addition, the Nobel Peace Prize will provide a better platform than we could ever have expected to reach further into civil society and make non-proliferation concerns known to all chemists, chemistry students and to the chemical industry around the world.

From the tragic consequences of the use of chemical weapons almost one hundred years ago during the First World War, a negotiated diplomatic process was born leading to the elimination of an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. Unfortunately, today this goal remains, more pertinent and imperative than ever.

I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Eighteenth Session of the Conference.

--- 0 ---