



**Statement by H.E. Mrs. Adia Sakiqi
Ambassador of Albania
and
Permanent Representative of Albania to the OPCW

at the 20th Conference of the States Parties
(The Hague, 30 November - 4 December 2015)**

Mr. Chairperson, Mr. Director-General, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen,

Firstly, allow me to express the appreciation of Republic of Albania for the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Vesela Mrden Korać of Croatia, for her leadership and devotion. Ambassador Eduardo Ibarrola-Nicolín of Mexico, we welcome you as the new Chair of the Conference. Allow me to extend the assurance of my delegation's full cooperation and support.

We are grateful to the Chair of the Executive Council, Ambassador, H.E., Francesco Azzarello of Italy and the other members of the Bureau for their intense work.

Thank you Director-General for your statement, which is appreciated by all.

Mr. Chairperson,

Albania, EU Candidate Country, fully subscribes with the statement of EU, delivered by Mr Jacek Bylica, Principal Advisor and Special Envoy, on the matters of substance for deliberation at this Conference.

Allow me to briefly dwell on the Albanian experience in destruction of our chemical weapons stockpile in 2007. I represent the country, possessor state that was the first to eliminate the entire category of chemical weapons, as required by the Convention. General Director, Ambassador Pfirter noted that "that this was a landmark achievement which underscored the value of the Convention as an instrument whose worthy goals are achievable."

The example of Albania shows that it is possible to achieve goals in a short period of time. That success was due to two important factors. Success was possible due to a combined effort of firstly cooperation and secondly professionalism, of the Albanian Authorities, on one side, and the OPCW, its Technical Secretariat, Executive Board and DG and the valuable support of the State Parties, on the other hand, in implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The use of chemical weapons, by anyone, in any circumstance must be condemned. We have one instrument which ensures this principle: Chemical Weapons Convention.

In this vein, we congratulate the Republic of Myanmar and the Republic of Angola on their accession to the Chemical Weapon convention and invite all states which are not party to ratify this valuable convention.

However we are facing many challenges at OPCW, and I would like to sort one out. The conclusions of the OPCW Fact Finding Mission on the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic are of great concern. That is why the Republic of Albania supports the continuation of the work of the FFM and reiterates that support to this mission needs to be insured in order for us at OPCW be provided with comprehensive findings.

Albania not only welcomed the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2235 on setting up a Joint Investigative Mechanism to identify the perpetrators of chemicals attacks in Syria, but the Republic of Albania concretely contributes to JIM in carrying out its mandate, in accordance with the international law and in compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We wish JIM success in its important mission!

On other matters of to be raised, Albania supports all OPCW action to investigate use of chemical weapons in Iraq and to assess the situation regarding the allegations of use of chemical weapons by non-State actors on Iraq territory.

Regarding prevention of re-emergence of chemical weapons, the more the State parties and the OPCW rely on innovation, research and technology, the better solution are to be found. We welcome all projects and initiatives that employ innovation and technology as the means to prevent the reemergence of chemical weapons.

Education is essential to the core of the goal of OPCW, that of achieving a world free of chemical weapons. The Republic of Albania supports the establishment of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach as the most comprehensive strategy to ensure the destruction of chemical weapons for the future generations.

Simultaneously, multilateral cooperation of the OPCW with relevant IO's, professional and societal organizations is crucial to making the continuous work a success. It is the wholesome and comprehensive approach which OPCW is employing, in its search for achievable results that we commend and fully support.

Priority for the Republic of Albania remains universal adherence to the Convention. We shall continue to work closely with State Parties, share our experience and render our contribution to peace security and stability.

I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Twentieth Session of the Conference of the States Parties.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.