



**Conference of States Parties
to the
Chemical Weapons Convention**

**Twentieth Session
30 November – 4 December 2015**

**Statement by Denmark during the
General Debate**

Delivered by H. E. Ambassador Ole E. Moesby

Check against delivery

Mr Chairperson, Mr. Director General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to address this Conference today on behalf of Denmark. Let me underline, that my delegation aligns itself fully with the statement made by Luxemburg on behalf of the European Union. I would like to use this opportunity to highlight a few points of particular interest to Denmark.

But let me begin by expressing our appreciation to the outgoing chairperson of the conference, Ambassador Vesela Mrden Korac of Croatia, for her successful efforts in leading the Conference over the past year. Let me also congratulate you, Ambassador Eduardo Ibarrola-Nicolín, with your election as chairperson of the Conference and welcome you in the chair. I am confident that your able stewardship will bring this session of the Conference to a successful conclusion, and you can count on the full support of my delegation. Likewise our gratitude goes to the Chairperson and the Bureau of the Executive Council for their tireless efforts.

Mr Chairperson,

In recent years some remarkable and important developments and events have taken place with respect to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW. The award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013, last year's conclusion of the multilateral removal operation aimed at eliminating the Syrian Chemical Weapons stockpile and this year's commemoration of the centenary of the first use of chemical weapons on a massive scale all give rise to reflection. The fact that this session takes place against the backdrop of continuing use of chemical weapons only underlines the seriousness and gravity of the issues facing us. In this context I wish to touch on two areas of concern:

- The situation with respect to the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme and confirmed and alleged use of Chemical Weapons, and
- The future of the OPCW

Mr Chairperson,

Firstly, the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic gives rise to very serious concerns. The OPCW Fact Finding Mission concerning alleged use of

Chemical Weapons in Syria has recently issued a number of new reports in which new use of toxic chemicals as weapons has been confirmed or deemed likely to have happened. This is simply horrific and unacceptable. We welcome the establishment of the Joint Investigative Mechanism by the UN Security Council, but while awaiting its findings on who is responsible for these attacks, we cannot ignore the fact that the FFM-reports provide reasonable grounds to believe that in many instances the Syrian regime may have been implicated.

The use of Chemical Weapons – against a civilian population, including women and children – is atrocious and horrific, and even more so when the general situation in Syria is taken into account. In a recent decision the Executive Council at its fiftieth session yet again condemned the use of Chemical Weapons in Syria, and rightfully so. The same sentiments were expressed by the UN Security Council in resolution 2235 establishing the JIM. The willingness of the Security Council to act under chapter VII of the UN Charter in case of further use of Chemical Weapons only underlines the gravity of the situation we find ourselves in. Denmark can only concur that it is imperative that those overall responsible for these attacks will be held accountable. In this context I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the staff of the FFM for their professionalism and unwavering commitment in establishing the truth and contributing to bringing about justice for the victims.

We welcome the work carried out by the OPCW Declarations Assessment Team in correcting and clarifying errors and omissions in the Syrian Declarations. It is however unsettling that the deeper one digs, the more questions and uncertainties arise casting doubt on the extent to which Syria is complying with its declaration obligations. In a situation where Chemical Weapons are being used such questions and uncertainties only add worry to an already very worrisome situation. While expressing our support and appreciation for the continued work of the DAT, Denmark calls on Syria to ensure that its declaration and related submissions are fully adequate and complete, in line with the Convention. We rely on the Executive Council to continue to monitor the situation in this regard, which is the only way to alleviate our lingering concerns.

Mr. Chairperson,

The second issue I wanted to touch on is the future of the OPCW. We still have some way to go before we can say that a world free of chemical weapons has been achieved. Nevertheless prudence demands that we

already now begin formulating a clear and operational vision for sustaining a world free of chemical weapons and preventing the re-emergence of these atrocious weapons. What is currently happening in Syria is one example of what we might need to prepare for in the future. The situation in Iraq is another, and perhaps more likely scenario, of alleged use of chemical weapons by a non-State actor. We welcome the cooperation between Iraq and the OPCW in this regard.

These are the type of scenarios we need to prepare for, and the tools at our disposal are many: the knowledge and expertise of the Technical Secretariat, challenge inspections and investigations of alleged use as provided for in the Convention, cooperation with other relevant international organisations and entities, stronger implementation of the Convention and restructuring of the Technical Secretariat to mention but a few. But these tools need to be dusted off and sharpened; some even need to be unwrapped for the first time. While we eagerly await the possessor states completion of their destruction efforts, this is where we should focus our attention and redouble our efforts. We would welcome future activities aimed at bringing this agenda forward, including also through the Working Group on Terrorism and its subsidiary bodies. The OPCW's vision paper for 2025 provides an excellent basis for such endeavours. One note of caution, though, as we move forward. In our endeavours to optimise the CWC-regime to deal with future threats and challenges we should keep the focus on our core business – security policy, demilitarisation and prevention of re-emergence. While it might be tempting to expand activities into other somehow related areas this will only spread resources too thinly and divert attention to issues that are best handled by others.

Mr. Chairperson,

This concludes my remarks. I would be remiss, however, if I did not welcome Angola and Myanmar into our CWC-family, bringing us closer to universal adherence. I also wish to thank and congratulate the Director General and his staff for an outstanding effort during the last twelve months.

I thank you, Mr Chairperson, and request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Conference.