



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twentieth Session
30 November – 4 December 2015

C-20/NAT.9
1 December 2015
ENGLISH only

NORWAY

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ANNIKEN R. KRUTNES
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NORWAY TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Thank you Chair,

I congratulate you on being elected Chairperson of this Session of the Conference of the States Parties. We look forward to cooperating with you, and ensure you of Norway's full support in addressing the tasks before us.

Norway has aligned itself with the EU statement. I would, however, like to highlight a few issues of particular importance to Norway.

The elimination of the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons programme has dominated the agenda of the OPCW for one more year. We welcome news that the destruction of chemical weapons production facilities and chemical agents will be completed in the near future. Norway highly appreciates the outstanding work of the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat, and also the efforts of UNOPS, in this regard.

We are gravely concerned by the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. A lasting political solution to this crisis is urgently required. We strongly condemn the use of toxic chemicals as weapons against civilians in the Syrian Arab Republic, as confirmed by the OPCW Fact-Finding Missions. This represents a clear breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention as well as resolution 2118 (2013) and 2209 (2015) of the United Nations Security Council. Norway remains determined that those found responsible for these horrific acts should be sanctioned. We highly appreciate the important work of the FFM and the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism and call upon all parties to cooperate with them.

Norway is also deeply worried by the discrepancies discovered in the Syrian declaration of chemical weapons. The work of the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team is of great importance and its completion will be welcomed.

Norway calls upon the Syrian Arab Republic to continue its cooperation with all parties involved in order to assure the world that all aspects of its chemical weapons programme have been completely eliminated.



While the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic will remain the most important issue for the OPCW in the near future, we must not lose sight of the basic tasks of this Organisation. Implementing the decisions of the Third Review Conference is vital.

First and foremost, we underline the importance of completing the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles, and urge the remaining possessor States to strive towards fulfilling their obligations as mandated by the Convention in an expedient and transparent manner.

Norway is encouraged by developments in the direction of universality over the past few years and welcomes Myanmar and Angola as new members of the OPCW. We appreciate the work of the Technical Secretariat in this regard.

Fostering international cooperation in peaceful uses of chemistry is an important goal. For many States Parties, this is a major incentive to stay engaged with the OPCW. Norway is committed to international cooperation and collaboration in the field of chemistry. We have been a major contributor to the OPCW Africa programme and have also supported the Kenya Programme, presented in one of yesterday's side events. Ensuring full implementation of the Convention by all States Parties is of crucial importance to foster conditions for such cooperation.

Norway has a vast and varied number of industries founded on peaceful uses of chemistry. We also have first-rate expertise on chemical safety and security, including in the field of chemical armaments. This expertise came to use during the maritime operation to transport chemical weapons out of the Syrian Arab Republic, when Norway provided a team with CBRN response capabilities. The Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI) is our national center of excellence in this field.

In the future, the OPCW will need to focus on preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons.

We welcome the establishment of "The Hague Ethical Guidelines" and encourage their promotion and application among chemistry practitioners. Norway is also concerned about the risk of misuse of toxic chemicals by non-State actors. We are deeply troubled by reports of alleged use of sulfur mustard by a terrorist organisation in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. We support work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism.

As one or hopefully several more non-States Parties join the Convention, there will be an increased need for inspection and verification. It is crucial that the OPCW maintains the necessary capacity for such tasks and that it remains the world's knowledge repository in the field of chemical weapons.

Norway has actively promoted increased interaction between the OPCW and civil society. External stakeholders, such as chemical industry associations, non-governmental organisations, think tanks, academia and others can provide valuable ideas and input to the advancement of the Convention. We appreciate that this Conference has continued the positive trend and welcome the participation of civil society in this session.

Engaging the scientific community can help ensure that its members do not contribute to proliferation or other hostile purposes. This is why education and outreach is so important.

We support the intention of the OPCW to enhance efforts related to this in the near future through the establishment of an Advisory Board.

Norway welcomes the Australian initiative to raise attention to the use of toxic chemicals in law enforcement. We look forward to the side event on this topic and are co-sponsors of a joint paper recommending discussion among States Parties and with the Technical Secretariat to increase transparency and build confidence in this field. On this note, I would like to state that Norway is not developing, producing, using or stockpiling any toxic chemicals, other than riot control agents, for its law enforcement purposes.

The OPCW cannot carry out its important tasks, without the necessary finances. We therefore call upon all States Parties that are in arrears to pay their contributions as soon as possible.

Finally, may I request that this statement be treated as an official document of this session and be posted on the internal server as well as on the web page of the OPCW.

Thank you for your attention.

- - - 0 - - -