



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twentieth Session
30 November – 4 December 2015

C-20/NAT.16
1 December 2015
ENGLISH only

NETHERLANDS

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JAN-LUCAS VAN HOORN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,

First I would like to thank the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Vesela Mrđen Korać for her excellent chairmanship. At the same time, my delegation is delighted to see you in the Chair of this Conference and assures you of our full support in the exercise of your function.

The Netherlands fully aligns itself with the statement pronounced by the Representative of the European Union. Further to that statement, I take this opportunity to make a few observations in a national capacity.

My delegation thanks the Director-General for his opening statement.

The Syrian Arab Republic

Last week the Executive Council met to discuss the latest reports of the Fact-finding Mission in Syria (FFM). As we expressed in our statement during that meeting, the findings of the mission are cause for grave concern. The fact that chemical weapons continue to be used in a State Party is unacceptable. There should be no doubt whatsoever that all States Parties to the Convention, without any exception, have the obligation to do everything within their power to combat the use of chemical weapons. We are content that the Council unanimously condemned the use of chemical weapons by anyone and under any circumstances.

These blatant breaches of the Convention, several Security Council resolutions and international law must not remain without consequences; those responsible for these acts must be held accountable. The Netherlands therefore welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), which established the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to identify the perpetrators of these heinous acts. As announced in the statement on behalf of the European Union, the EU will make substantial financial contributions to both the United Nations and to the OPCW to support the work of the JIM and the FFM. In addition to this EU contribution, the Netherlands has decided to donate EUR 250.000 towards the operational costs of the JIM.

More than two years after the Syrian Arab Republic's accession to the Convention, the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme remains the most prominent issue on



the agenda of the OPCW. Despite all the measures taken and the major efforts by many, we regret to note that the Syria-dossier cannot be closed as yet. The many uncertainties surrounding the completeness and accuracy of the Syrian Arab Republic's declarations still need to be resolved. My delegation commends the Declaration Assessment Team for its untiring efforts in helping to provide clarity. At the same time it must be stressed that it is incumbent upon the Syrian Arab Republic to provide full disclosure about its chemical weapons programme and to take away any doubts that remain about its Declaration.

Budget and finances

The Netherlands welcomes the fact that again this year, States Parties have reached agreement on the draft Programme and Budget for next year during the informal consultations ahead of the October session of the Executive Council. We commend the facilitator, Mr Antti Vaaras of Finland, for the expert manner in which he led the consultations. While we are pleased with the agreement reached regarding the 2016 Budget, we express concern about the dire cash situation of the Organisation. It should be clear that all States Parties must meet their financial obligations in full and on time. Different solutions are available to countries with arrears; we call on them to make use of the options offered and to settle outstanding payments without delay.

Future OPCW

In our view it is essential that the OPCW take the necessary steps to prepare itself for the future. In this context, it may be appropriate to set up an open-ended working group as a follow up on the views and proposals expressed during the 'Retreat on the Future of the OPCW'. We are looking forward in actively participating in those deliberations.

ABEO and ethical guidelines

The Netherlands welcomes the various activities undertaken by the Secretariat to improve relationships and cooperation with external stakeholders. It is the conviction of this delegation that the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach will strengthen the role of the Convention by improving interaction with the chemical industry, academia and other relevant organisations.

It is with this in mind, that my delegation also expresses its support for the German initiative to actively promote The Hague Ethical Guidelines. By applying norms and ethical standards in the practice of chemistry, the scientific community underlines the goals of the Convention and peaceful uses of chemicals in research and industry.

Universalisation

The past year has also provided good news. The Convention has moved two steps closer to universal membership with the accession of Myanmar and Angola. We warmly welcome them.

We also welcome the representatives of chemical industry, the scientific community and civil society. Their contributions add value to our deliberations and we thank them for their presence. It is therefore with regret that we note that not all non-governmental organisations that wished to attend this Conference have been allowed to do so. Blocking an NGO solely

on the basis of its country of origin, while its stated objective is the promotion of universalisation, is doing disservice to the Convention.

Host country issues

Yesterday, all delegations found a complimentary copy of the book 'Disarmament and Related Treaties' on their desks. This publication, the first complete collection of legal instruments concerning disarmament and non-proliferation underlines the importance the Netherlands attaches to international law, its development and its implementation. We hope the book will be a useful tool, both as a work of reference in your daily activities, and as a reminder of the importance of universal adherence to the instruments of non-proliferation and disarmament.

As you know, the Netherlands has assumed the rental cost for the World Forum as venue of the Conference of the States Parties for the past three years. As representative of the Host Country it is my pleasure to announce that the Netherlands will continue to do so in the coming years.

In ending, I would like to request that this statement be considered as an official document of this Conference, and published on the external server and the website of the OPCW.

Thank you.

- - - 0 - - -