



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twentieth Session
30 November – 4 December 2015

C-20/NAT.33
1 December 2015
ENGLISH only

BRAZIL

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PIRAGIBE S. TARRAGÔ
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BRAZIL TO THE OPCW
AT THE TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Señor Presidente,

Es un gran placer para mi delegación felicitarlo por haber asumido la Presidencia de esta Conferencia, que, estoy seguro, Ud. animará con su experiencia y conocimiento. I would also like to reiterate our appreciation for the Director-General's leadership and the Technical Secretariat's endeavours in carrying out the main tasks assigned to the OPCW in 2015.

Mr Chairperson,

We should congratulate ourselves for the many achievements of this Organisation in the current year. The States Parties and the Technical Secretariat have made the Chemical Weapons Convention an example of success in the global structure of disarmament and non-proliferation. Its accomplishments stand no comparison with other multilateral institutions. In this regard, the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference comes to mind.

Only last week the Executive Council successfully cleaned the slate of the most pressing substantive issues, as it took a decision with regard to the three Fact-Finding Mission's reports. It also addressed the first confirmation of use of a Schedule 1 chemical by a non-State actor. We should use this momentum to collectively act in suppressing non-State actor's ability to launch chemical attacks. For this purpose, the Organisation's capacity should be strengthened, enabling it to deal with the risks related to these weapons, which are technologically within the reach of anyone with a moderate industrial capability.

As the civil strife in the Syrian Arab Republic drags on, it becomes even more important the pursuance of the Syrian dismantlement programme, since the risk of chemicals being used as a weapon remains high. Therefore, we should encourage the authorities of the possessor State to abide by their Chemical Weapons Convention's obligations, and take all the necessary measures to prevent any use of toxic chemicals as a means of warfare in their territory. A task which should also be carried out by all parties participating in the conflict and supported by those with influence on them.

It is undeniable that only a political solution can pave the way for the restoration of peace and stability to the Syrian Arab Republic and put to rest the risk of chemicals being used as weapons in its territory.



My delegation is encouraged by the positive outcomes of the Syrian dismantlement programme. And while States Parties may differ in their assessment of the precise extent to which progress has been attained, seemingly, most of us can acknowledge the achievements of the OPCW in completing the demolition of all but one chemical weapons production facility, finalising the overseas destruction operations, engaging with the Syrian Authorities and coordinating with United Nations specialised agencies. Brazil hopes that all these efforts will continue in the coming year, and will be enhanced by the cooperation of all States Parties.

In the intersessional period, the OPCW reached more than 91% of destruction the stockpiles amassed before the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. It has supervised the deactivation of four out of five destruction facilities in the Russian Federation. It is ready to inspect the destruction activities to be carried out by the United States of America, in Pueblo. The expeditious destruction of all the declared stockpiles, under an enhanced verification and reporting regime, is crucial to confirm and consolidate the success of this Organisation.

Likewise, as we get close to this important milestone, with the completion of the destruction of the largest stockpiles declared, we need to prepare to devise OPCW's long-term strategy. On that tenet, all the States Parties should approach such event in a constructive manner and help the Organisation avoid repeating possible shortcomings. In particular, we believe in a better distribution of efforts amongst all the areas specified in the Convention, including the balance between verification and international cooperation and assistance.

Brazil is committed to gradually increasing its role as a provider of cooperation. We have prepared a presentation on our experience to be shown in a side event, on Wednesday. Two videos of our emergency and response trainings are scheduled to be screened. In addition, my country is considering to establish a regional Centre for Assistance and Protection.

Last May, the OPCW opened its International Laboratory Training Facility. Such initiative enjoys our full support. Brazil has long participated in international inter-laboratory proficiency tests in the framework of chemical disarmament. It is our hope that the Southern hemisphere will soon count on an accredited lab.

Also, the OPCW has agreed on the establishment of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach. As we look at the long-term strategy for this Organisation, we can be sure that this new consultative organ will help us move forward in reaching out a broader public and improving awareness of the need to prevent the unethical use of chemical products.

Brazilian authorities attach great importance to safeguarding the research, production, stocks, trade and use of drugs applied to medical and veterinary purposes, which can be turned into incapacitating agents, or ICAs. While noting efforts to bring scientific objectivity to the definition of ICAs, my delegation is ready to join the discussions on the risks associated with the use of these substances for law enforcement purposes. It is our understanding that only riot control agents can be safely used for law enforcement, and that such use of any other substances should be prohibited.

Overall, this has been a very special year for this Organisation. Already enjoying a near-universal status, the Chemical Weapons Convention has been ratified by another two

States, Myanmar and Angola. Although participation is growing, it remains incomplete. It is noteworthy the significant absence of States located in highly politically and militarily unstable areas. There is no justification for the signatories of the Geneva Protocol not to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention. Those who have not yet acceded to the Convention should do so without delay.

At this session, we count on NGOs, representatives of the chemical industry, and victims, who are here today, alongside governments, to address the challenges of permanently ridding the world of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. Your support and advocacy are important driving forces to complete the universalisation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and to render multiple stakeholders more aware of the abhorrent nature of chemical weapons.

I should like to request that this statement be included in the official records of this Conference.

Thank you.

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