



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

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AUSTRALIA

STATEMENT BY H.E. DR BRETT MASON PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRALIA TO THE OPCW AT THE TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES UNDER AGENDA ITEM 9 ON STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

Mr Chairman,

Australia has the honour of promoting the joint statement, presented by the distinguished Ambassador of Canada, along with our Dutch colleagues.

You will be aware that Australia strongly supports the decision by the Executive Council on 11 November, which condemned the use of chemical weapons in Syria and established additional necessary verification measures for the Syrian Government. We are convinced that this Session of the Conference must not pass by without States Parties speaking out, and making clear that the use of chemical weapons can never be tolerated.

Our Organisation has made remarkable progress in ridding the world of chemical weapons. In recognition of our achievements, the OPCW was, quite rightly, awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. This was not an honour for the Technical Secretariat alone, nor for any particular nation or group of nations. It was an award to each and every one of us represented here in this room, for the OPCW forging a safer world. However, the Nobel is a prize for past success, not an endowment of future virtue.

Tragically, over the last several years, it has been proven that chemical weapons have once more been used-and by a State Party to this Convention, the Syrian Arab Republic. This is the most serious violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention since its entry into force nearly 20 years ago.

Australia therefore encourages all delegations to add their voice and associate themselves with this joint statement of concern. We must not fail to speak out against this mounting threat to our Convention. Not just for the sake of the OPCW, but for the noble and necessary goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

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