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Mister Chairman, Director General, Distinguished Delegates, CWC Coalition Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It has been almost 20 years since the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), with the destruction of over 66,000 metric tons of weapons material; this Convention is a success of multilateral disarmament. However, today as we stand on this platform to celebrate the huge success of one of the most effective disarmament measures, the challenge to the treaty also has entered a new level.

The ability of the non-state actors to gain access to the chemical weapons stockpiles, globalized technology, and mass use of riot control agents raises questions of both the scope of the treaty and the challenge of modernity. There is an urgent need to address the gap with regards to the destruction of the entire weapons stockpiles as well as the effective implementation of the Convention by the possessor states. This is affected by changes in international security, and the universality of approach towards the challenge of existing stockpiles of chemical weapons, complete declaration of materials and stockpiles. Expansion in the deadlines for destruction, emerging technologies, unregulated industry, and lags in the legislative measures, but foremost by globalization and democratization of terror, have all compounded the challenge.

Unfortunately, as states deal with these challenges, the breakthroughs in the world of chemical industry, ranging from biotoxins to advanced use of chemicals in peace applications as well as civilian security situations, the threat of the misuse of chemicals has increased.

Whether it is the use of chemical weapons by ISIL or the increased probability of industrial incidents in the developing world, or potential war zones sparring from Europe to the America, the vulnerability of the general population towards the hazards of chemical weapons has increased three fold. In the case of South Asia, Afghanistan, Central Asia and the Middle East, the overlap in the global terror networks, especially in the form of Waliyat e khursan (the local

variant of ISIL in Afghanistan), multiplicity of the warring factions, growing narco-trade, and the increased accessibility of chemical precursors has all made the threat disproportionate to the measures taken to reduce it.

Similarly, riot control agents (RCAs) such as white phosphorus and the use of nerve agents in conflict and war zones creates a complexity of a new kind, requiring a concerted effort at the international level to take effective measures to retard this trend if not eliminate it. Populations are perhaps the first victims of unsafe and unsecured use of chemicals, and those of existing stockpiles of chemical weapons in peace times and in war.

It is important that measures are taken at the multilateral level to not only regulate the free flow of chemicals for the development of industry, but also to institutionalize mechanisms of cooperation in the scientific field for a more balanced divide under the Convention between the developed and developing states. Achieving universal compliance with and effective implementation of the CWC, and speeding up of the destruction of declared chemical weapons stocks is of utmost centrality, if the world is to be free of the dangers of the chemical weapons. The growing divide in chemical industry practices, chemical extraction processes in war zones, the use of base chemicals through unauthorized use such as the development of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and unsafe use in chemical industry or excessive use in political exigencies as defensive measures by state parties are placing new demands on the states parties, legal systems, and the convention to respond to these developments.

As State Parties come up with effective measures through a shared multilateral disarmament call and by strengthening the Convention, there is a growing desire that civil society and its institutions step up to fill in the gaps of knowledge and outreach, to support the work being carried out by the States Parties under the OPCW umbrella. Here, I would like to congratulate the CWC Coalition and Paul Walker for his leading contribution towards this goal.

I also take this opportunity to highlight the work being carried out by the South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI) University in increasing public awareness, and working and supporting the outstanding work being carried out in Pakistan's National Authority. It is praiseworthy because of developing a comprehensive industry outreach and compliance program. Especially as Pakistan deals with the challenge of non-state actors, the innovation in

the process and broad-based program has helped to steer the state capacity to deal with emerging challenges as well as also for remaining committed to the goals of the OPCW and the Convention.

Similarly, the outreach program at SASSI expands on the work of the Convention through sustained certificate and diploma programs for academia, industry, and the media regarding the CWC. We also had the privilege to co-host Director-General Ahmet Uzumcu as part of the public outreach activities of the OPCW in Pakistan. The public talk by the Director-General was well received and increased public awareness. In addition, the institute also brings out a CWC monitor, a monthly e- journal of the developments around the CWC and emerging technologies, alongside hosting of seminars and conferences.

In the end, I would like to state that the openness and growing responsiveness of the OPCW towards civil society and in particular the CWC Coalition is a positive development and the need of the hour. In the era of change, technology and increased power of non-state actors to use chemical technology and weapons to create shock and awe, public outreach and a fresh look is required to build on the relevance of the CWC for a peaceful world. A more cohesive response by industry, States Parties, and the OPCW along with civil society and its institutions is a necessary partnership to realize the goal of a world free of chemical weapons.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I wish for this statement to be made part of the final CSP record and posted on the external server and website.