



British Embassy  
The Hague

**STATEMENT BY H.E AMBASSADOR SIR GEOFFREY ADAMS, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND TO THE ORGANISATION  
FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS**

**TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION'S CONFERENCE OF STATES  
PARTIES**

Check against delivery

Thank you Mr Chairman, Director-General,

The United Kingdom supports the statement made on behalf of the European Union by Jacek Bylica, Special Envoy for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation. I would like to add some additional remarks.

First, Director General, let me thank you for your leadership and wise counsel to this Conference and to the OPCW's Executive Council throughout a challenging year for the Convention. Never has the Convention's founding principle, that chemical weapons use is illegal, immoral and abhorrent, been tested as much as it has by the regular use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism's reports' findings that chlorine had been used in attacks in Qaminas, Sarmin and Talmenes demonstrate the Syrian regime's utter contempt for the Chemical Weapons Convention, and other long held tenets of international law. The use of barrel bombs containing chlorine could amount to a war crime, and is in clear breach of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2118, 2209 and 2235, Decisions of the OPCW's Executive Council, and Syria's obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. Daesh's use of sulphur mustard in Marea could also amount to a war crime, and shows their complete disregard for international law. Any use of chemical weapons, by anyone, anywhere must be condemned. It cannot be ignored or brushed aside. Action must be taken to hold perpetrators to account and bring them to justice. We welcome the Executive Council's Decision of 11 November to respond to the JIM reports' findings. It was a signal of the OPCW's intention to defend the Convention and demand compliance with international law.

Unfortunately, the story does not end here. We note that the OPCW's Fact Finding Mission continues to investigate allegations of chemical weapons use in Syria. Allegations continue to be made that both the Syrian Regime and non-state actors are using toxic chemicals as weapons, despite global condemnation of the use of chemical weapons. We welcome the adoption by the United Nation's Security Council of resolution 2319, which renews the JIM's mandate for a further year. We express our strong support for the work of both the Fact Finding Mission and the JIM in their determination to pursue all credible allegations of chemical weapons use in Syria.

The United Kingdom is deeply concerned that the Director General and Technical Secretariat are still unable to confirm that Syria has provided a complete or accurate declaration of its chemical weapons programme. The extent of the gaps in Syria's declaration, combined with its willingness to use toxic chemicals as weapons, leave substantial grounds for concern that Syria has retained elements of its stockpile and is prepared to use them again. Syria has clearly been found to have used chlorine filled bombs as a weapon. Yet, it has not declared a chlorine programme. Both Syria's use of chemical weapons and its failure to fully declare its programme must be addressed before it can be considered to be in compliance with the Convention. We urge Syria to cooperate fully with the OPCW to resolve all outstanding issues, and to provide the full access required for the OPCW to the Syrian Scientific Research Centre facilities at Barzah and Jamraya.

We note with concern ongoing reporting of use of chemicals as weapons by terrorists in Iraq. We express our horror at such attacks, and our condolences to the victims. We welcome the Government of Iraq's decision to invite the OPCW to support its investigations into chemical weapons use in Iraq.

societies in such endeavours. We will continue to promote The Hague Ethical Guidelines to ensure ethical scientific development among chemistry professionals in the United Kingdom.

Mr Chairman,

Significant progress has been made over the past 20 years to promote universal adherence to the Convention. The Director General's personal engagement has delivered positive results during his tenure. We call on the only four states yet to join the Convention: the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Israel and South Sudan, to join without further delay.

All CWC States Parties, and the OPCW, must now focus greater efforts to ensure its universal national implementation. As States Parties we each have a responsibility to ensure that we implement fully the Convention's requirements. There should be no "safe havens" for terrorist misuse of toxic chemicals. We encourage States Parties who have not completed their national implementation processes to make full use of all the available assistance from the OPCW. In this context, we thank the Director General and Technical Secretariat for their work to implement OPCW's Africa Programme. The UK has been pleased to support OPCW's recent training for East Africa Community States, and to work with Malawi under the auspices of the Partnership Programme.

We are pleased to see zero growth achieved in the agreed 2017 Programme and Budget. We welcome the agreement that the OPCW must do more to improve the evaluation of its activities in order better to assess the impact of its work, including its success. We encourage the Technical Secretariat to improve the quality of its annual Programme Performance Report. This will require an improved, systemic approach to evaluation and performance monitoring across the organisation, including the development of a programme management and evaluation policy.

The OPCW relies on all States Parties to the Convention to provide the resources it needs to carry out its vital work. Indeed, it is an obligation of States Parties to do so. We continue to be concerned by late or non-payment of assessed contributions, and the lack of reimbursement by some states for verification activities. The Director General reported at the most recent Executive Council session that the 2016 collection rate for assessed contributions is lower than it was in 2015. In addition, around €5 million remain outstanding in Article IV and V verification costs. This has a serious impact on the OPCW's finances. We again call on States Parties concerned, especially those with significant outstanding amounts, to pay their contributions in full to enable the OPCW to deliver its mandate.

Finally, Mr Chairman,

The UK is a co-author of the paper submitted to this Conference on the aerosolisation of central nervous system acting chemicals. We believe that this paper is a useful contribution to the debate on the use of toxic chemicals for law enforcement purposes, and we thank Australia and Switzerland for their constructive approach.

I request that this statement be issued as an official document of this session of the Conference of the States Parties and posted on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you, Mr Chairman

Mr Chairman,

Recent events serve to highlight that preventing use of chemical weapons remains a global challenge to which we all need to respond. The OPCW has faced a radical and transformative period dealing with the situation in Syria. It has had to adapt its ways of working in order to verify a challenging destruction programme, assess Syria's declaration under the Convention, and investigate chemical weapons use. It is essential that the Technical Secretariat use this experience for the benefit of us all, sharing lessons learnt and new best practice accordingly.

To do this, the Secretariat needs to retain the expertise and capability to conduct the full range of activity that States Parties require of it to support global implementation of the Convention. In this context, it is vital that current staff tenure policy be revisited. The Director-General needs the flexibility to retain experienced, talented, experts to deal with the challenges we face. We welcome the establishment of the Open Ended Working Group on Future Priorities for the OPCW, and express our thanks to the strong leadership of the Ambassadors of Canada and South Africa for framing its work to date. We look forward to an open and positive dialogue in the year ahead, so that we can all build an OPCW fit for 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges.

We are pleased to note that there has been real progress on our global destruction target this year. The Decision of this OPCW's Executive Council to facilitate the removal of Libya's remaining precursor chemicals for destruction in Germany was a model of international cooperation and partnership. The UK was happy to play a role in this important work, to prevent the potential acquisition of toxic chemicals for malicious purposes by Daesh or others.

Mr Chairman,

The United Kingdom strongly supports the vital work of the Scientific Advisory Board. We are pleased by the progress made to address the Board's recommendations, and encourage States Parties to continue working together to resolve remaining issues. As the global chemical industry continues to evolve, and takes advantage of new technologies, it is essential that the verification regime also evolves in line with the aims of the Convention. We welcome the recent work by the OPCW Laboratory and the Validation Group to update the OPCW's Central Analytical Database, which we hope will improve the efficiency of the verification process overall.

The rapid pace of developments in science and technology, combined with globalised access to knowledge, presents new and diverse challenges. States Parties must remain alert to these challenges, and the threat that terrorists may seek to acquire or develop chemical weapons. We welcome the work carried out over the past year by the Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors, and the work led by the United States for the Executive Council to promote recommendations to counter chemical terrorism. We hope that the US proposed Decision can be adopted by the Executive Council in the near future.

Encouraging awareness and education about the challenges is the first step to ensure vigilance, and to prevent chemistry being used for evil. We welcome the establishment of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach to support engagement with academia, schools and industry. The work of national and international chemical societies to support education and outreach has an important role in preventing the future re-emergence of chemical weapons. We welcome the recent Seville Declaration by the European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences, which condemned the use of chlorine as a weapon. As States Parties, we should encourage and support our chemical