



OPCW

Conference of the States Parties

Twenty-First Session
28 November – 2 December 2016

C-21/NAT.41
30 November 2016
ENGLISH and SPANISH only

ARGENTINA

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR HÉCTOR HORACIO SALVADOR
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ARGENTINA TO THE OPCW AT THE
TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson, Ambassador Christoph Israng,

On behalf of the entire delegation of Argentina, I congratulate you on your appointment and I extend my greetings to the other authorities here at this Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, OPCW officials, and all of the delegations present here today. We are at your service, Mr Chairperson, and we trust in your recognised professionalism and your strong ability to direct these sessions to the desired results.

We would also like to accord special recognition to your predecessor Dr Eduardo Ibarrola Nicolás, Ambassador of Mexico, for performing his duties in such an effective manner.

As this session was opened, Director-General Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü presented a detailed report on the state of the Organisation and the various activities that are being developed. Together with the other statements already voiced on this matter, we now have more clarity and inspiration to move forward with the tasks facing this Conference, in line with the agenda that we have adopted.

The complete elimination of chemical weapons—the central objective of this Organisation—is a key element of Argentina's position on non-proliferation and disarmament, for a world free of all types of weapons of mass destruction. Within this context, Argentina absolutely and firmly reiterates its condemnation of the use of chemical weapons and the use of chemicals as weapons by anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstances.

We align ourselves with the call that has been made once again to the States who still possess weapons of this nature, urging them to take all possible measures to achieve complete destruction, in compliance with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the decisions of this Organisation.

Further, we continue to urge each and every one of the members of the international community to participate in this institution. Achieving universality in the Organisation's membership is crucial. We fully support the actions of the Technical Secretariat towards that end and we urge all States Parties in a position to do so to contribute to those efforts.



Last May, we commemorated the establishment of the International Day for the Foundation of the OPCW at the Organisation's headquarters here in The Hague. The Republic of Argentina was represented by Deputy Foreign Minister and Ambassador Carlos Foradori, who recalled and renewed our country's commitment to the OPCW within the framework of the objectives and principles that guide Argentina's foreign policy in this area.

During his visit to the OPCW, Vice Chancellor Foradori, together with other South American representatives, led the commemoration of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the signing of what is known as the Mendoza Agreement. This instrument, which was signed in Mendoza (Argentina) in 1991, was a statement on disarmament and non-proliferation of chemical and biological weapons proposed by Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, and joined by Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Uruguay. A placard now hangs today at the OPCW building, reminding us of this important milestone that later influenced the process of the adoption of the Convention and the establishment of our Organisation.

We have taken great steps forward since the Organisation's establishment and, as has been recalled by one of the speakers today, we are close to chemical disarmament. Nevertheless, we continue to observe with shock the repeated use of chemical weapons or chemicals as weapons. We all believe that these atrocities must stop and that those responsible must be brought to justice.

In this regard, the OPCW has recently put its response capacities to the test. It has broadened its mechanisms, added tools, and adopted new decisions. The Fact-Finding Mission will continue in the Syrian Arab Republic, and the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism of the OPCW and the United Nations has been extended for an additional period.

On another front, the OPCW is analysing the actions that it may take under its mandate against the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors and the threat of terrorism. We welcome the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism and its Sub-Working Group on Non-State Actors, facilitated by the Ambassadors of Ghana and Chile, respectively.

As it faces complex situations, the Organisation must stand strong before the realities in an appropriate manner, without acting beyond the scope of its mandate as established by the Convention; at the same time, it must uphold its credibility. It has not always been possible to take consensus-based decisions to accommodate the interests of all members. The most recent example of this is, without a doubt, decision EC-83/DEC.5 of the Executive Council on the reports of the Joint Investigative Mechanism, which was finally adopted by a vote this past 11 November.

It is important to recall that the successes of this Organisation, which have resulted in universal recognition of its work in support of peace and disarmament, have been achieved by the ability to nurture the necessary consensus. In our opinion, we must continue to take inspiration from this good practice in the times that are upon us, while searching for a way to reach a consensus, including in the implementation of the decisions that are adopted.

The right to the peaceful use of chemistry is crucial for development. Exercising this right should be accompanied by training in the responsible use of chemical expertise, ethics, and boosting awareness of the obligations of the Convention.

Within this context, we trust that the Advisory Board for Education and Outreach will produce useful insight in an integral and homogenous manner. We are fully willing to collaborate in this area, which signals an auspicious future. We welcome the fact that a distinguished Argentine professional, Dr Edith Valles, is a member of said Board of experts.

In this same vein, we highlight the excellent work being undertaken by the Co-Chairpersons of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW, the Ambassadors of Canada and South Africa. Under their leadership, we are confident that the Group will be able to move forward toward obtaining the consensus necessary in order to identify the priorities of our Organisation in the years to come.

We reaffirm our willingness to continue actively collaborating in all aspects of the Convention and promoting a balanced expansion of the functions of the OPCW, across all of its pillars.

From our perspective, this includes—prominently—specific actions in personnel training and activities in assistance and cooperation. In 2016, Argentina participated for the first time in the industry segment of the Associates Programme, and the results were very positive. International fellows were received at an industrial chemical plant in our country, an event that will take place again in 2017.

For Argentina's part, we will continue with advanced regional courses on assistance and protection, in which more than one hundred experts have already participated over the past five years.

I would also like to mention the advanced course on emergency response to chemical emergencies, the sixth iteration of which will soon begin, the second course on laboratory safety, and the first course on chemical nanotechnology.

A variety of details regarding the activities developed in Argentina were shared at the meeting of the National Authorities that took place last week at OPCW Headquarters, where the National Authority of Argentina was represented by Dr Mariano Simón Padrós and Dr Elba Biscotti.

Other elements of Argentina's initiatives in the field of education and outreach were communicated by the Alternate Representative to the OPCW, Dr Nicolás Vidal, during an important workshop on Article XI of the Convention that took place this past 22 November that will be addressed at this Conference.

The year 2017 is approaching, and bringing with it important challenges, which include the continued preparation for the future of the Organisation ahead of the Fourth Review Conference in 2018. At the same time, we must take advantage of the great opportunity offered us by the twentieth anniversary of the OPCW. The Organisation does not have all of the answers to the challenges posed by chemical disarmament, but it is a vital tool that will help us to achieve the highest goals that we have set for ourselves and contribute to putting a decisive end to one of the cruellest scourges that humankind has inflicted upon itself.

Thank you.