

**Statement Marco Mensink**  
**OPCW Conference of State Parties**  
**29 November 2017, The Hague**

Dear Chairman,  
Dear Ambassador Uzümcü,  
Ambassadors,  
Distinguished delegates and colleagues,

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to address you for the first time in my capacity as Council Secretary of the International Council of Chemical Associations. ICCA represents the global chemical industry with over 90% of global chemical sales. I would like to stress the unwavering support of ICCA for the purpose and object of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The relevance of the Convention and the OPCW remains undiminished even if the destruction of existing stockpiles of chemical weapons is nearing its completion. Several workshops were held between the OPCW Technical Secretariat and experts from industry to share relevant knowledge and enhance security aspects.

Looking back, I am very pleased to note that our partnership with the OPCW has developed in a very positive way. As a consequence of the fact that the OPCW has developed from an auditor and regulator to a partner that aims to improving the verification regime and ensuring that chemicals are not used for prohibited purposes. It also aims to help to improve the capacity of States Parties through international cooperation programmes. The cooperation with OPCW enables ICCA to roll out its Responsible Care Programme to other countries, including in Africa.

The value of a structured dialogue between the OPCW and ICCA is also explicitly highlighted in the October 2017 note of the Director General of OPCW about 'Engaging the Chemical Industry Associations'. It stated that by giving representatives of the global chemical industry the opportunity to express their views on the implementation of the Convention - including in meetings of the policy-making organs - the engagement of the chemical industry will be sustained and will become increasingly practical in nature. The Chemical Industry Coordination Group and Joint Steering Committee, set up in 2014 following an exchange of letters between the OPCW and ICCA, have meanwhile proven their value as coordinating tools.

The chemical industry is not only an important stakeholder and partner in implementation, but it can also be a resource, for example by sharing best practices and by providing expertise about products, services and know how. Chemical associations are also useful disseminators of information and can give feedback about the effectiveness of proposed and existing legislation. Industry players can also share experience from other control regimes applicable to chemicals.

Dialogue is thus a key to success! Participation in expert hearings and conferences and the ability to provide written submissions and position papers are invaluable tools to maintain the dialogue. The creation of a trustful partnership is not only valuable for ICCA and the OPCW Secretariat, but also for the relations between national authorities and industrial players – “Sharing is Caring”!

As regards capacity building I am particularly proud of the development of the OPCW Associate Programme. In 2017, with the support of ICCA and national chemical associations, 18 chemical plant sites from 15 Member States hosted participants of the Associate Programme for a three-week training course. This allowed participants to gain exposure to modern practices in chemical industries, with special focus on chemical safety. For ICCA, chemical safety and security are flip sides of the same coin. We acknowledge the coordinating role the OPCW can play with respect to chemical security, but counsel against duplication of relevant work already undertaken in dedicated other international organisations regarding chemical safety.

I personally had the honour to participate in the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorative ceremony in The Hague in April, while ICCA representatives participated in four other commemorative events held in Gambia, Jamaica, Qatar and Georgia. It was furthermore a great honour and pleasure for us to welcome Ambassador Uzümcü at the ICCA Board of Directors meeting in Vienna last month. These events were just the tip of the iceberg of numerous meetings held this year around the world, covering a wide range of issues from chemical security, transfer discrepancies, on trends in chemicals production, education and outreach, green and sustainable chemistry, etc.

Finally yet importantly, we are grateful that ICCA was invited to participate in the discussion on future priorities of the OPCW and we will continue to constructively contribute to Article XI activities of the organisation. Ahead of next year’s fourth review, ICCA will also provide its position on relevant topics for the industry.

Distinguished delegates,

I can assure you of the continued support of the ICCA for your work in implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention fully and effectively, in the spirit of partnership and constructive cooperation.

Thank you for your attention.