



Republic of Poland
The 22nd session of the Conference of State Parties
Statement by H.E. Marcin Czepelak
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Poland to the OPCW

*Mister Chairperson,
Director General,
Distinguished Delegates,*

At the outset, let me echo words of appreciation for the outgoing Chairperson Ambassador dr Christoph Israng of Germany, and welcome in this distinguished function Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki of Morocco. I wish to assure you, Excellency, of the Polish delegation's support for your efforts in the months to come.

Mister Chairperson,

Aligning with the EU statement, I would like to address some issues particularly important for my country.

As defined by *founding fathers* of the Convention, the Conference of States Parties, the highest decision-making body of the Organization, has special responsibilities. With this in mind we have to deal with fundamental challenges for the OPCW related to use of chemical weapons. At the same time we have also to set the scene for process leading us to the Review Conference next year. This is a must to enhance the OPCW credibility and adapt it to the unpredictable future.

Let me elaborate on this in **three** brief points.

Firstly, on the eve of the 20th anniversary, international community is still remote from the ambitious idea of the world free of chemical weapons.

There are of course significant achievements that have to be praised. 192 States Parties, covering 98% global population, have joined the Convention. Progress in elimination of chemical weapons is undisputable, just to mention

the Libyan case, or the recent remarkable example of the full destruction of chemical weapons declared by the Russian Federation.

Despite all this the last developments have drawn a pessimistic picture: the bedrock of the Convention, international norm against use of chemical weapons, is being, openly and fundamentally, undermined. It raises questions on the Convention integrity and the OPCW credibility.

Can we agree to it?

The position of the Polish government is crystal clear in this regard.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons, including those recently confirmed by the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism related to the release of sarin at Khan Shaykhun in 2017 and the use of sulphur mustard at Umm-Hawsh in 2016. We demand that the perpetrators immediately desist from any further use of chemical weapons and call for them to be held to account. We support appropriate actions to address this situation.

In the ongoing discussions we shall do our utmost to stop weakening of the whole chemical disarmament and non-proliferation regime; in longer term – to pave the way to rebuild and enhance it. This is the message we have to convey while gathering at the main entrance of the OPCW headquarters on November 30 to pay tribute to victims of chemical warfare, of the past and of the present.

Secondly, this situation has an impact on discussion on the preparation of the Review Conference in 2018. Last year from this place the Polish Delegation stressed the need for a kind of **4 Cs** approach, related to **C**redibility, **C**ontinuity, **C**apabilities and **C**ooperation. This should be a driving force of our considerations while we will review the Convention and set the strategic guidance for its future, **primarily** within the framework of the designated bodies for the RevCon preparation.

Poland would support these efforts to the biggest possible extent. We would pay a special attention to such issues as decreasing chemical threat, promoting international cooperation and enhancing chemical security and safety. As raised many times before at various fora, there is also a need to consider the OPCW role as a platform for voluntary consultations and collaboration on a set of other issues related to scope and objective of the Convention. Sea-dumped chemical weapons and central nervous system-acting chemicals are good examples.

Mister Chairperson,

Thirdly, our future success depends upon the overall united support of the international community for the world free of chemical weapons. This exactly why Poland, similarly to previous years, presented, as its solely sponsor, the United Nations General Assembly Draft Resolution on the CWC implementation. For years the resolution has contributed to international peace and security. It has been enhancing chemical non-proliferation regime that is based upon the Convention and its implementing body – the OPCW. This what we need also today, even more than ever. The resolution has been adopted by the UNGA First Committee in November with enormous support of States Parties. Poland was doing its utmost to address situation in a balanced manner through open and transparent process. We are convinced that the UN General Assembly in December will recognize the role of resolution and provide a coherent signal of support for the Convention and the CWC in this demanding time.

[TO INTERPRETERS THIS WILL BE DELIVERED IN SPANISH AS BELOW]

Finally, I would like to seize this opportunity to express satisfaction of the Polish government with the Executive Council consensual recommendation to this CSP regarding nomination of the Distinguished Ambassador of Spain, His Excellency Fernando Arias Gonzales, for the new Director-General. Being the Permanent Representative to the OPCW for just few months, personally, I strongly admire His Excellency's willingness and readiness to perform this tough job – just due to the reasons described above it does not seem to be easier next year and later. You can count, Excellency, on support of the Polish authorities in this regard.

Thank you

SPANISH VERSION: Por último, me gustaría aprovechar esa oportunidad para expresar la satisfacción del Gobierno polaco por la recomendación consensuada del Consejo Ejecutivo para la Conferencia de los Estados Partes sobre el nombramiento del Excmo. Señor Embajador de España D. Fernando Arias Gonzales para el puesto del nuevo Director General de la Secretaría Técnica. Aunque llevo escasos dos meses como representante de Polonia ante la OPAQ, ya he tenido el honor de conocerle personalmente. Lo que más valoro es su disposición, su talento y su determinación para desempeñar esa ardua tarea que sin duda no lo será menos en los próximos años, tal y como lo he señalado previamente. Le aseguro, Excelencia, que puede contar con el apoyo de las autoridades polacas.

