



**OPCW**

**Conference of the States Parties**

Twenty-Second Session  
27 November – 1 December 2017

C-22/NAT.15  
29 November 2017  
ENGLISH only

**UKRAINE**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR VSEVOLOD CHENTSOV  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF UKRAINE TO THE OPCW AT THE  
TWENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Ukraine aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union by Special Envoy for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. I take this opportunity to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

The Twenty-Second Session of the Conference of the States Parties is taking place in a challenging moment for the OPCW. During the period between the Twenty-First and the Twenty-Second Sessions of the Conference of the States Parties we have been witnessing crucial developments in global peace and security.

On the one hand, this year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention which is widely recognised as the first multilateral instrument, banning an entire class of weapons of mass destruction under a strict international control and compliance mechanism. The Convention has made a major contribution to strengthening international peace and security, by setting up new standards for global disarmament and non-proliferation, by providing assistance and protection against chemical weapons.

On the other hand, this year has been marked by the use of chemical weapons in Iraq, in Malaysia and especially in the Syrian Arab Republic with high number of victims.

The OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) established under United Nations Security Council resolution 2235 (2015) has confirmed in its third, fourth and recent seventh report that the Syrian authorities are responsible for several attacks involving chlorine gas and sarin, and that the terrorist group ISIL-Daesh has used mustard gas in the Syrian conflict. The last report of the Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM) confirms another case of an attack where sarin was more than likely used as a chemical weapon on 30 March 2017 in the south of Ltamenah.

It stands to reason that perpetrators of these horrific attacks must be held accountable. Ukraine condemns, in the strongest terms, any use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic or anywhere else, by anyone and under any circumstances.

Ukraine is deeply concerned with the continued gaps, inconsistencies and ambiguities in the chemical weapons declarations that the Syrian authorities submitted in 2013, as reported by



the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team (DAT). Ukraine strongly supports the work of the DAT and deplores the fact that the OPCW is not in a position to confirm that the Syrian declaration is “exact and exhaustive”. The Syrian authorities must cooperate fully and pro-actively with the OPCW in addressing comprehensively all outstanding issues.

Ukraine welcomes the work conducted over the past year by the JIM, the FFM and DAT – oftentimes in difficult and dangerous circumstances. A continued threat of chemical weapons use in the Syrian Arab Republic has to be dealt with with determination and in the shortest time possible. In this vein we thank the JIM for its efforts and significant contribution in deterring further use of chemical weapons or chemicals as a weapon against the Syrian people and express our deep regret that the JIM’s mandate has been blocked by the Russian Federation. Inability to preserve the JIM may trigger further dangerous consequences in and beyond the Syrian Arab Republic. We must remain vigilant against those who have demonstrated their clear intent to use these weapons in the future. Preventing such attacks is vital and necessary.

Ukraine takes all necessary steps to increase the effectiveness of the national system for chemical safety and security.

At the same time the Russian Federation’s hybrid aggression against Ukraine in particular its support of militants on the East of our country has led to the surge of chemical safety and security risks in these areas.

We face destruction of critical, infrastructure, the loss of state control over numerous high-risk facilities and a significant part of the state border. This situation is highly conducive to perpetrating of terrorist acts, including the use of hazardous chemicals. In particular, it is not excluded that militants may not only misuse toxic chemical in their possible disposal but also attack chemical facilities or build make-shift labs.

We would like to draw the attention of the Organisation to this situation.

In this regard we are grateful to the facilitators of the Working Group on Terrorism and Sub-working Group on Non-State Actors for their efforts in formulating the OPCW’s response to emerging threats. This Organisation can indeed play a crucial role in the global response to terrorism with its unique technical capacities and mandate to support and assist in case of a chemical attack.

Like many other delegations, Ukraine attaches particular importance to the timely and safe destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles, accumulated by the possessor States.

Ukraine wishes to underline that the total destruction of all categories of chemical weapons is a fundamental requirement of the Convention. We urge all possessor States to continue with their efforts to complete destruction in the shortest time possible.

The universality of the Convention is an important factor to enhance its credibility and ensure the irreversible character of chemical disarmament in global dimension.

We strongly believe that in order to create the atmosphere of international trust, transparency and mutual responsibility, we need the highest degree of participation in the Convention.

Since some States have not yet made their choice in favour of the Convention, we also believe that it is a common task to use all possible political instruments to convince them to join the Convention in order to achieve its ultimate goal – to make the world free of chemical weapons.

My Government appeals to those countries, which have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention to do so without further delay. In the meantime we urge all States to strictly adhere to the United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and to exclude any possibility of use of chemical weapons.

Using this opportunity I would also like to inform you that on 2 and 3 November 2017 Ukraine hosted an international workshop “Promoting the effective implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) in the context of evolving proliferation risks and challenges”.

The main purpose of the workshop was to assess evolving proliferation risks and challenges in the area of non-proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the context of the 2016 Comprehensive Review of implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), endorsed by the United Nations Security Council resolution 2325 (2016), and to further identify opportunities for practical, operational and enforcement cooperation between the States, international and regional organisations to address current challenges and threats to the non-proliferation regime. The Chairperson’s Note with the relevant recommendations will be provided to the States Parties via the Secretariat.

We fully support the Director-General’s efforts in introducing further efficiency and cost-saving measures, ensuring the best use of limited available resources. This would allow the OPCW to absorb additional expenses within existing resources. In the current economic situation everyone – including the OPCW – must be prepared to do more with less. In this regard we welcome the draft Programme and Budget of the OPCW for 2018.

Since both chemical industry and science play a growing role in modern society, the proper implementation of the Convention by its States Parties at the national level is of critical importance for its viability. We are pleased to note that the implementation of basic obligations stemming from Article VII of the Convention is being actively pursued. We believe that the States Parties lacking capacity and capability would get appropriate assistance and technical support enabling them to fully implement the Convention. We would also like to urge all for a systematic approach to the full and effective implementation of Article XI of the Convention.

Ukraine recognises the importance of future priorities of the OPCW, and in this regard commends the work done so far by the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities. We would like to encourage continued discussion to develop a consensus-based document for its adoption at the Forth Review Conference next year.

At this session of the Conference we are addressing the issues that demand our close attention. The delegation of Ukraine is ready to co-operate fully with the delegations of other States Parties and the OPCW Secretariat to do its utmost to work for the implementation of the important task of the Organisation aimed at complete elimination of chemical weapons.

Before closing my remarks I would like to join previous speakers and thank the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Christoph Israng of Germany for the excellent way he guided our work during the last year.

We also congratulate Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki of Morocco as the Chairperson of this Conference and I assure you of our full support in the exercise of your function.

Last but not least I would like to thank the Director-General Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for his tremendous input into activities of the OPCW and wish Ambassador Fernando Arias a successful continuation of the important mission of strengthening this Organisation.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, and I would like to request that this statement be treated as an official document of the Conference.

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