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STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES AT ITS SECOND SESSION

1. In my inaugural speech to the Conference of the States Parties at its First Session, I provided a brief vision of my perception of my mandate as Director-General of the OPCW. Now, at the beginning of the Second Session of the Conference of the States Parties, approximately two hundred days later, it is perhaps the appropriate time for me to report on the progress made in realising my vision. First, however, let me make one or two important observations.

2. Our Convention is the first multilateral treaty to be simultaneously comprehensive, non-discriminatory and verifiable. It is comprehensive in that it aims to eliminate an entire category of weapons of mass destruction within specific pre-determined time-frames. It is non-discriminatory in that all States Parties to the Convention, without exception, commit themselves not to engage in any chemical weapons-related activities. The Convention is verifiable in that it provides for on-site inspections, including short notice challenge inspections, to clarify and resolve any questions concerning possible non-compliance. These first 200 days have shown that, despite fears to the contrary, multilateral disarmament treaties of this nature can be made to work. It is already evident that the Chemical Weapons Convention has broken new ground in the history of disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

3. The successful implementation of our Convention will be a key component in the further development and strengthening of a much broader international regime to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to engender confidence in their elimination. We, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, face unprecedented challenges as we embark on the implementation of this Convention. No other international agency of its kind has been constituted with so wide a mandate. At the heart of the Convention is the unique system which it creates to verify compliance with its provisions. Essentially, the success of the Convention will depend on the success of its verification regime. I am happy to inform you that, in our first two hundred days of operation, substantial progress has been registered in this area.

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* Reissued in English for technical reasons.

4. During the preparatory phase it had been assumed, for budgetary and planning purposes, that only three States, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, and one unnamed other State, would declare the possession of chemical weapons. In fact, eight States have already declared either the possession of chemical weapons or a past production capability which is now destroyed. This list does not include the Russian Federation, which will formally join us before the end of this week. Thus, a clearer picture is already emerging about the quantity and locations of chemical weapons activities, past and present, in the world - an essential step in progress towards the eventual elimination of this class of weapon of mass destruction.

5. Progress has also been solid as regards the second pillar of the Convention's verification system - on-site inspections. The very first OPCW inspection was launched on 1 June 1997, just over one month after the entry into force of the Convention. This first inspection took place in the United States of America at a facility which was in the process of destroying chemical weapons from the US stockpile when the Convention entered into force. As of last Friday, 115 initial inspections and visits had been conducted on the territory of 21 Member States. These inspections were, of course, primarily concentrated on chemical weapons-related facilities and on facilities producing Schedule 1 chemicals, as the Convention requires that the initial inspection of facilities of this type be completed within six months of its entry into force. This was, I assure you, an extremely onerous requirement, but I am nevertheless pleased to say that we have largely managed to achieve this target. In addition, continuous monitoring of chemical weapons destruction operations has been established at three CW destruction facilities in the United States of America. Recently the inspection of Schedule 2 facilities began, and the frequency of inspections of this type of facility will continue to increase as we move into 1998. Altogether more than 120 inspections will have been completed before the end of 1997.

6. In my inaugural speech at the First Session of the Conference I stressed the importance of developing and maintaining contacts with Member States to promote dialogue and a fruitful exchange of ideas on how we can best achieve our common purposes, while at the same time bringing other States, both signatory and non-signatory, into the fold. In The Hague, I have received a number of senior government officials from Member States, as well as from signatory States which, when I received them, had not yet deposited their instruments of ratification. In September, I visited the Russian Federation and the Ukraine to discuss the process of ratification in those countries. On 30 September I delivered an address to the 41st General Conference of the IAEA. From 8 - 11 October I paid an official visit to Romania, during which time I also took the opportunity to address two Committees of the North Atlantic Assembly. Also in October, I visited the United Nations Headquarters in New York where, in addition to addressing the First Committee of the General Assembly, I met with the President of the General Assembly, the Foreign Minister of Ukraine, H.E. Mr Genády Udovénko, and with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Kofi Annan. During my stay in New York I also met with representatives of more than forty countries which have yet to ratify or accede to our Convention. Finally, from 22 - 25 November, I made an official visit to India, where I held discussions with senior government officials on issues related to the implementation of the Convention

in that country. At the invitation of the Government of India, I also made a brief visit to one of its declared facilities.

7. My experiences in the time since my address to the Conference at its First Session have persuaded me of the particular importance of assisting Member States to implement the Convention at a national level. For example, the declaration requirements for States Parties are extremely complex, and some States have consequently experienced difficulty in compiling the requisite information. As a result of the combined efforts of States Parties and the Secretariat, some progress has been made, and the situation as regards national compliance with all provisions of the Convention continues to improve slowly. As of last week, initial declarations had been received from 70 of the 101 States Parties from which declarations are currently due. It should be noted, however, that this means that 31 States Parties have yet to submit their initial declaration. In addition a number of the initial declarations which have been submitted are by no means complete. If this situation of "technical non-compliance" continues at its current level in 1998, this may have serious implications for the successful implementation of the Convention. For example, the application of a fair and balanced inspection regime would prove problematical, if not impossible, particularly in relation to declarations under Article VI. The absence of a declaration, or an incomplete declaration, could precipitate a challenge inspection for the State Party concerned, with all the ramifications of this. In respect to this last point, States Parties may wish to ponder whether it would be acceptable for a State Party which is itself in non-compliance to challenge another State Party for non-compliance. In order to avoid such complications, I urge States Parties once again to put their best efforts into meeting their obligation to provide both full and complete declarations and the other notifications required under the Convention. Since this is a novel experience for everyone, it may be seen as only natural to allow States Parties some extra time to prepare and submit their declarations. Nevertheless, there must ultimately be a limit to this, and a level of tolerance has to be determined at the political level, if we are to comply with the letter and spirit of the Convention. I urge you, the assembled States Parties to the Convention, to give further thought to this very complex and sensitive issue.

8. While the verification regime forms the core of the work of the OPCW, there are other critically important tasks to be undertaken, one of which is the implementation of Article XI of the Convention. This Article provides the necessary balance between disarmament and non-proliferation commitments on the one hand, and free trade and cooperation for peaceful purposes on the other. I see it as an essential part of my mandate to ensure that the Secretariat helps in any way possible to ensure that this carefully engineered balance is preserved as the implementation of the Convention moves forward.

9. During this initial period a number of steps have been taken to strengthen the International Cooperation and Assistance Division, which is now working hard under its Director to develop a range of programmes aimed at promoting technical cooperation and assistance between States Parties. In addition to running two National Authorities' training courses - one in Zimbabwe and one in the Netherlands - several international cooperation programmes have already been initiated since the

entry into force of the Convention. Some time will, of course, be required for these programmes to reach fruition. Member States are, however, already beginning to benefit from some of them such as, for example, the programme to facilitate participation in international meetings in the fields of chemistry and chemical technology. Several requests have also been received in connection with the programme to facilitate the transfer, to under-resourced laboratories in developing countries, of redundant, but functional laboratory equipment. The Secretariat has released some initial funds for the first in a series of programmes to support the improvement of technical competence at national chemical analytical laboratories. A number of institutions have expressed interest in the International Cooperation and Assistance Division's Internship Programme, mostly in the form of requests, and here again the Secretariat is actively seeking offers to match these requests. Furthermore, a chemical technology transfer website has been opened. A bibliographical database has been set up, which is now being populated by information contained in documents which the Secretariat has either received as donations or has otherwise acquired. At this point I would like to take the opportunity to remind Member States that additional material for the data bank on protection is always very welcome.

10. The experimental information service, established under Article XI, is now beginning to receive the attention which it deserves, especially from the chemical industry in developing Member States. I would encourage you once again to provide the Secretariat with addresses of chemical companies and research laboratories that could benefit from this, in order to enable us to inform the chemical industry directly of the advantages offered by this information service.

11. Clearly, during this first two hundred days there have been challenges. In my inaugural speech I began by saying that it was my intention to carry out my mandate with perseverance, transparency and open-mindedness. I believe that I have done this, and I trust that you will agree with this view. One of my most important aims is the development of a culture of transparency for the work of the OPCW. It is true that the Convention itself requires the protection of confidential information, and it is also true that it was this reassurance which allowed such an intrusive verification system to be accepted in the first instance. But the preservation of confidential information in the chemical industry needs to be balanced with the need to be as open and transparent as possible about activities in the military field. I therefore urge you all to strive to overcome the traditional reluctance which has grown up over the years in relation to chemical weapons-related matters and to develop instead a culture of openness on this issue, not only vis-à-vis the OPCW, but also vis-à-vis the outside world at large. This is an essential step on the road to establishing our credibility as a body capable of overseeing the attainment of a world which is free from the threat of chemical weapons. We have a duty to inform the international community of the Organisation's activities, as well as of the progress being made in identifying and destroying chemical weapons and their associated facilities. Our mandate is after all to protect confidential information, not to perpetuate secrecy. There is, however, some progress in this regard. The great majority of States Parties which had submitted their initial declarations have agreed to the release of some information about their declarations. The fact that some of these States have taken this courageous decision in spite of their perception of considerable security threats in

their respective regions highlights their commendable long-range vision that only through personal example and truly global action will the Convention be able to achieve its ultimate goal of complete universality. I hope that those Member States which have yet to join this consensus will continue to review their position on this issue. The Chemical Weapons Convention is supposed to bring about transparency and trust. That is why we should look beyond its scope of application in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation, and should also understand and use it as a powerful political instrument for the building of confidence in the sensitive regions of the world. The dynamic force of the Convention will ensure that confidence is built in its efficacy, while simultaneously providing for its further development and strengthening as more States decide to join its regime.

12. The promotion of the universality of the Convention is another fundamental challenge. I believe that steady progress continues to be made in this area. Eighty-seven States were party to the Convention upon its entry into force, and this number will have risen to 105 by the end of this week. A further 63 States are signatories to the Convention. All five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council will be States Parties on 5 December 1997, and the Convention now captures the overwhelming majority of the world's chemical industry. Unfortunately, there are still some important States which remain outside the ambit of the Convention, particularly within the CIS - the Ukraine and Kazakhstan, amongst others - and in the Middle East, Africa and in some parts of Asia. The membership of States such as Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Syrian Arab Republic, and Sudan, is essential if the Convention is to achieve its aim. I am hopeful that Jordan's recent accession to the Convention will sensitise the above-mentioned States in this region to re-examine their position in relation to this treaty. In particular I hope that Israel, which played such an active role in the work of the Preparatory Commission, will take the final small step necessary to join the fold. Egypt is one country which also has a fundamental role to play in this context. I am sure that the contribution of this country to the peace process in the Middle East, as well as to disarmament negotiations throughout the last 25 years, will determine its final, hopefully, imminent decision in relation to our Convention. In South East Asia the absence of important countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam continues to come between us and the achievement of our global target. In addition, accession by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would be a major boost to regional security in North Asia. Member States in these regions may wish to consider whether there is any additional action which they might take to encourage the non-States Parties in their region to join in helping us to achieve our goal. I would also urge my Latin American colleagues to increase their efforts to ensure that universality is achieved in their region. One particular development, I have just been informed, is the imminent ratification by Venezuela, which will hopefully bring the total of Member States to 106 before the closure of this session of the Conference. Finally there is the problem of Africa which, with only 21 Member States out of the 53 countries in the African Group in the United Nations having ratified or acceded to the Convention, is, I regret to say, the region with the lowest membership of the Convention. My impression here, however, is that the issue is still one of a lack of awareness of the importance of this Convention, rather than any political inhibition about its object and purpose. The

Secretariat will, therefore continue with its efforts to assist countries in this region to either ratify or accede to the Convention.

13. During my visit to the United Nations General Assembly I took the opportunity to meet individually with representatives of more than 30 of these signatory and non-signatory States. At each of these meetings I once again put forward the compelling reasons why they should ratify or, in the case of those States which have not signed the Convention, accede to the Convention. That is not only for the universality of the Convention, but also to ensure that these States will have access to the political and economic benefits which ratification or accession will bring. It was clear from these meetings that many of these countries were not fully aware either of the trade restrictions in certain chemicals that will increasingly apply to non-States Parties or of the freedom from these same trade restrictions that will apply to Member States of the OPCW. I am thus taking action to make sure that all of these non-States Parties are made fully aware of this dimension of the Convention. In addition, my staff and I will continue our efforts to stress the political, economic and technological benefits of joining this Convention. To that end, a Regional Seminar on National Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention was held in Libreville, Gabon, from 23 - 24 October 1997. Closer to home, work has continued with our Brussels Project, and my staff have undertaken a number of detailed briefings for Brussels-based delegations on the developments here in The Hague. As we move towards universality of the Convention, the threat of chemical weapons will be progressively reduced and, by the same token, political constraints on their development will be substantially reinforced.

14. Returning to the issue of confidentiality, I am of course fully aware of my responsibility to ensure that confidential information provided by Member States is protected to the fullest extent possible. During these first 200 days my staff and I have worked tirelessly, not only to establish a confidentiality regime, but also to engender a confidentiality culture throughout the Organisation. Confidentiality procedures have been established, a confidentiality manual has been written and published, and training courses in confidentiality have been prepared and implemented. Appropriate staff are currently undergoing training in this area, and my aim is to ensure that they have all completed at least the initial training course by the end of this year. This is, of course, an area in which on-going training is required if we are to maintain our confidentiality culture, and procedures have been put in place to ensure that this happens. My Director of Internal Oversight is now developing and establishing procedures to enable him to undertake regular auditing of our performance in the area of confidentiality. I expect these procedures to be rapidly implemented as we move into 1998. The Confidentiality Commission has met twice, and its first report has been circulated to delegations. However, the Confidentiality Commission's report makes a number of specific recommendations which will require careful consideration by delegations before the Conference decides whether to proceed with their adoption. I have in mind in particular those recommendations related to the storage of confidential information outside the OPCW environment.

15. As some Member States are aware, it was the Secretariat's plan to store and process all declarations and associated documentation electronically using an electronic documentation management system (EDMS). The time necessary to establish this

system and to confirm its security status has, however, proved to be much greater than had been anticipated by the designers of the EDMS. As a result it has been necessary for the Secretariat to handle all such declaration-related documentation in hard copy format only. This has proved to be an extremely onerous task, and has resulted in many members of my staff having to work a large number of additional hours in order to ensure that the Convention's time lines were met. Thanks to the efforts of both the Secretariat and those Member States which provided experts at no cost to the Organisation to assist in resolving the problems with the EDMS, I believe the programme for its establishment is now back on course. It is my hope that, shortly after the move to our new permanent headquarters in February 1998, it will prove possible to finally bring the EDMS into use and thus to ease the current very heavy workload in this area. It should also make it possible for us to provide more of the statistical information which delegations are seeking regarding the overall compliance of Member States.

16. At a number of meetings of the Executive Council, I have raised the issue of the level of classification being applied by individual Member States to their declarations and inspection reports. I make no excuse for raising this issue once more in the wider forum of the Conference of the States Parties. The over-classification of documentation not only imposes an increased workload on both the Secretariat and those Member States which wish to exercise their right to access such information, but it can also, inevitably, lead to a downgrading of the status of the respective classification levels. I therefore urge Member States once more to review their declarations and other documentation such as inspection reports etc., to see if the levels of classification continue to be appropriate. Some information is clearly very sensitive, and must therefore be accorded the appropriate level of classification. Even in such situations it is, however, sometimes possible to avoid classifying whole documents as "Protected" or " Highly Protected" by simply removing the sensitive information to a classified annex, or by simply not including the information and instead making reference to its original location.

17. The inclusion by States Parties of conditions or qualifications in their ratification procedures with regard to their compliance with the Convention has, in the Secretariat's view, the potential to seriously hamper the effective implementation of our objectives, and indeed to create major operational problems for our Organisation. One particular example has to do with the removal of samples by inspection teams for analysis at designated laboratories outside the State Party concerned. Other States Parties have already indicated to the Secretariat that they may apply similar restrictions. This leaves the Secretariat in the position of not knowing where it stands on the issue of off-site - out of country - analysis, or of also not knowing how to proceed with the associated problems of designating laboratories and monitoring their performance through proficiency testing. I would, therefore, appreciate guidance from the Member States on how they wish me to proceed on this issue before I take any further steps in this area.

18. Another major political issue is the continued lack of consensus among Member States on the proposed text for the bilateral agreement between the OPCW and the United Nations. The absence of such an instrument may pose problems for the

effective implementation of the Convention. It is interesting to speculate, for example, on what would happen if there were a request for an investigation of alleged use in the near future. Such investigations have traditionally fallen into the area of responsibility of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. In the absence of a bilateral agreement between the OPCW and the United Nations, will a Member State of the OPCW which seeks such an investigation in future find itself receiving both a UN team and an OPCW team at one and the same time? If the opportunity is lost to resolve this issue during this session of the Conference, we will inevitably face another year without such an agreement. In my view this is not a development which a major international Organisation should tolerate.

19. As many delegations are aware, during the summer I was faced with such a severe cash-flow problem that it became necessary to delay all but the most essential expenditure. Fortunately this situation eased in September, when a number of major contributors paid all or part of their 1997 assessments. The status of appropriations by programme and by main object of expenditure as of 31 October 1997 shows that, even after the obligation of salaries and common staff costs in the amount of NLG 14 million for the months of November and December 1997, NLG 42 million, or approximately 48% of the budget, is still theoretically available. The sum actually available is, of course, considerably less than this, as a number of contributions equivalent to 18% of the 1997 budget are still outstanding. Whilst much of this underspending is the result of the restrictions imposed on spending during the long hot summer of the above-mentioned cash-flow problem, significant savings were also made by adopting resource-saving measures such as sequential inspections.

20. Now that the cash-flow situation has improved considerably, the Secretariat is making every effort to make appropriate use of the budget, especially in the areas of the procurement of equipment related to inspection and information systems and of recruitment to fill current vacancies. Inevitably, however, the 1997 budget will end with an unspent balance of between NLG 27 to NLG 35 million, depending on the actual rate of expenditure during the last two months, as well as on common staff costs caused by the late filling of some 60 posts, including 15 inspector posts from Training Group A and the forced deferral from 1997 to 1998 of the recruitment of 10 Training Group A inspector posts.

21. I have reported regularly since May to the Council on the progress being made towards the realisation of the new OPCW headquarters building, and I now take this opportunity once again to confirm that the building project remains within budget and on target for completion before mid-January 1998. There will undoubtedly, however, be a number of tasks associated with the equipping of the building which will require some additional time to conclude. Plans are now being prepared for the Secretariat to move into the new building over a ten-day period beginning in mid-February 1998. It should be noted that, while the Secretariat will endeavour to continue its normal operations throughout the period of the move, it is inevitable that some disruption to the services available will occur. I therefore ask you to assist us by keeping to a minimum your requests for Secretariat support during this period. One or two issues in relation to the occupation of the new premises still need to be settled. I remain confident, however, that, with the full support of the Host Country and the OPCW

Foundation, these issues will be resolved and that the move will take place on the planned date.

22. I can also report that the internal design team of Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood has, within the past week, worked with the authorities of the City of Ypres, Belgium, and with the OPCW Foundation (on behalf of the Host Country) on the preparation of their generous offers of art work for the new building. I am informed that, during an early session of the Preparatory Commission, an understanding was reached that the Executive Council Chamber should bear the name of the "Ypres Room". It is my intention to honour this understanding.

23. I have informed members of the Executive Council of my intention to undertake a review of the proposed staffing structure of the Technical Secretariat, with a view to ensuring that it would most efficiently perform the tasks assigned to it. As a result of this review, which was undertaken with the assistance of my Director of Internal Oversight, I decided to make a number of changes in the staffing structure of the Technical Secretariat. It is the opinion of my Management Board and myself that these changes are in keeping with the needs of the new Organisation and will help to increase its effectiveness. I wish to stress that, where these changes have involved the movement of staff, this has been undertaken in full consultation with them, and in accordance with the Interim Staff Regulations of the OPCW. These changes have been reflected in the draft 1998 budget, for the sake of transparency, even though in general they have no budgetary implications. It is my intention to ask the Director of Internal Oversight to continue his review of the functioning of the Secretariat during 1998. The Secretariat is continuing to evolve, and it is possible that, as our work patterns develop, further adjustments may prove necessary if we are to achieve the goal of a lean and efficient Secretariat which is espoused by both the Secretariat and the Member States of the OPCW.

24. Let me now turn to perhaps the most critical issue of all at this session of the Conference, the draft 1998 budget. The draft which has been presented to you for this week is the result of an initial thorough review, by the Management Board and myself, of our projected requirements for 1998, followed by an extensive review by the Executive Council. The budget proposed, which currently stands at a very modest overall total of approximately NLG 132 million, is significantly less than the figure projected for a full year at the First Session of the Conference. However, this draft budget contains two areas which will require further discussion before it can be adopted by the Conference.

25. The first of these areas is the question of the level of reimbursement which the Secretariat can expect to receive for inspections carried out under Articles IV and V of the Convention during 1998. Absence of agreement on which costs must be borne by Member States which have submitted or will submit declarations under Articles IV and V makes it impossible for the Secretariat to produce realistic estimates of the likely level of reimbursement during 1998. Member States are, therefore, faced with two options: the first is to agree on a gross budget and then to deduct the actual reimbursements received during 1998 from the gross 1999 budget; the second is to agree on a nominal figure for reimbursement during 1998 and to base 1998

assessments of Member States on the net budget, after deducting this nominal figure. The problem with the latter option is that, should the actual level of reimbursement received turn out to be less than the nominal figure proposed, it could leave the Secretariat with insufficient funds to fulfil its verification mandate. For this reason I would recommend that Member States give serious consideration to the adoption of a gross budget for 1998.

26. The other outstanding issue is the question of the appropriate staffing level necessary within the Secretariat to support the projected additional workload which will result from a number of significant ratifications which took place after the draft budget was finally drawn up by the Executive Council at its Seventh Session. Whilst provision was made in the draft 1998 budget to cover the anticipated inspection tasks and costs if the Russian Federation were to be a State Party in 1998, no such provision was made to cover the corresponding, significant increase in the workload within the Verification and Administration Divisions. Member States will be aware from my reports to the Executive Council that it has already been difficult for the Secretariat to cope with the existing workload associated with the verifying of declarations under Articles IV and V. Ratification by the Russian Federation, which has indicated publicly that it possesses 40,000 agent tonnes of chemical weapons, i.e. more than the combined total of the other three declared possessors, means that the workload in the chemical demilitarisation and related areas of the Verification Division has effectively doubled. The augmentation of personnel resources in this area, as well as in the areas of operations and health and safety, will be required if the Secretariat is to meet its commitments in a timely fashion.

27. Perhaps this is also an opportune time for me to remind you of the understanding communicated by Ambassador Peter Feith, the Chairman of the First Session of the Conference, in his closing statement at the First Session. I quote: "…as membership of the Organisation expands, the size and shape of the structure of the Technical Secretariat may require further review, in order to ensure that it adequately reflects the need[s] of the Organisation and [the] appropriate balance between different regions." There will clearly need to be further consideration of this issue before the budget is ready for adoption.

28. Before closing I would like to address one further issue. In common with all Member States, I am more than happy to welcome the recent ratification of the Convention by the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Nepal, Pakistan and the Russian Federation. As I made clear in a number of speeches this autumn, it is my conviction that the full participation in this Convention of the Russian Federation - a permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations, and the State with largest declared stockpile of chemical weapons - is an essential prerequisite for the success of the Convention. The Russian Federation has now taken the final step of depositing its instrument of ratification, and now confronts the difficult and expensive task of destroying its large stockpile of chemical weapons within the timelines set down in the Convention. A number of Member States have previously indicated that, were the Russian Federation to join the Convention, they would consider assisting it in this onerous task. The rapid and safe destruction of these weapons is in all our interests, and now is the time for those Member States which are in a position to do so to give

serious consideration to making offers of assistance, confirming offers already made, and expanding on such offers of assistance, whenever possible.

29. Two hundred days is a very short period, but I believe that it has been sufficient to demonstrate that we are off to a sound start and that a multilateral disarmament Convention such as ours can work. After all, what other multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation agreement could boast a membership that brings together, only six months after its entry into force, the likes of Australia, the United States of America, the Russian Federation, China, Iran, India, Pakistan, and the European Union, to mention just a few. There are, of course, difficulties ahead, some of which will need to be resolved in the coming week. It is, however, my firm belief that, through consultation, and on the basis of the shared political commitment of all Member States, we can reach consensus and move forward with our task of making this a world which will forever be free from the threat of chemical weapons.

30. Thank you.

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